

0/0

X

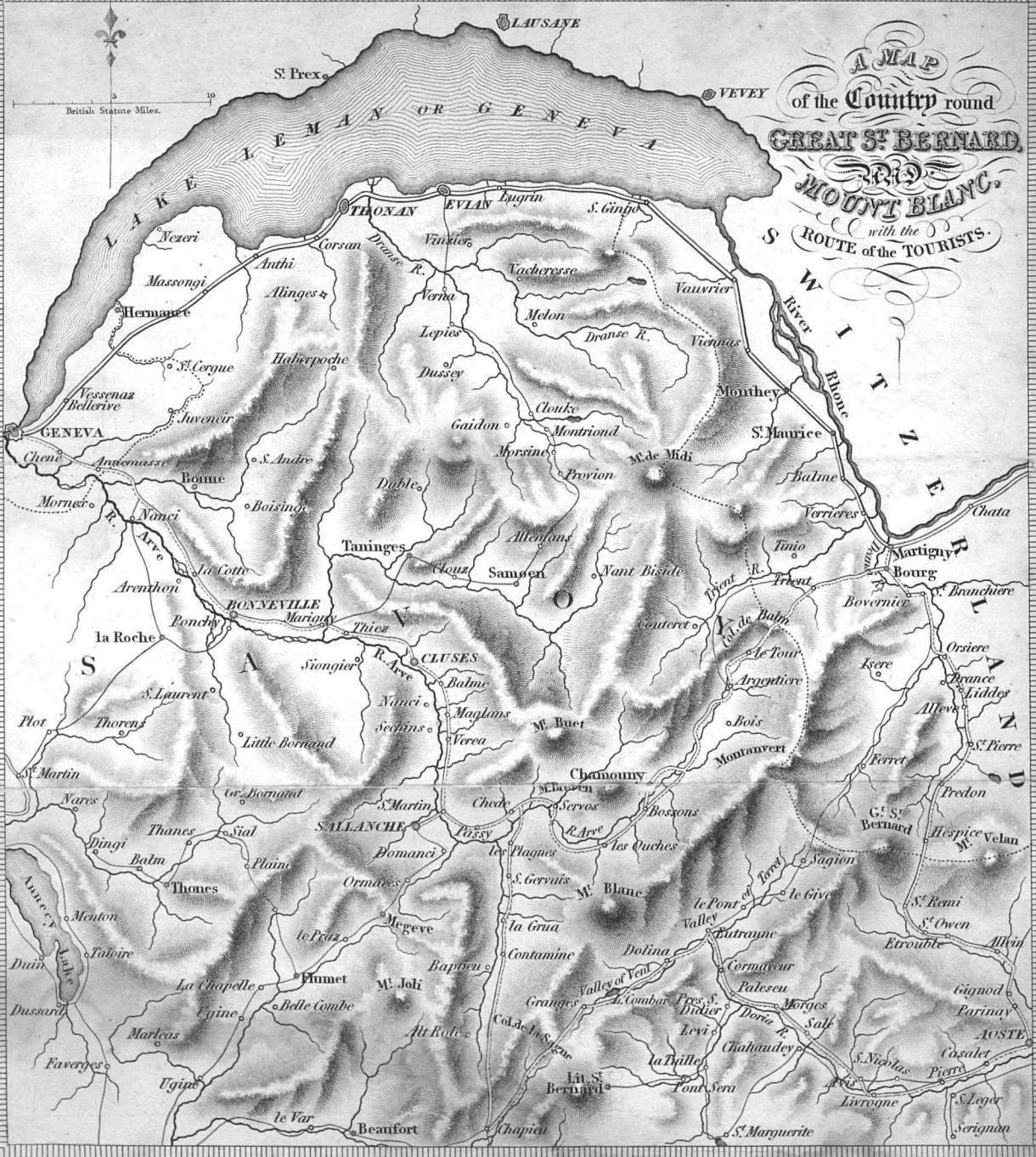
Engraved folding map
- 16 engravings.

from lower



British Statute Miles.
0 5 10

A MAP
of the Country round
GREAT ST. BERNARD
MOUNT BLANC.
(with the)
ROUTE of the TOURISTS.



A TOUR
TO
GREAT ST. BERNARD'S
AND ROUND
Mont Blanc.

WITH
DESCRIPTIONS COPIED FROM A JOURNAL
KEPT BY THE AUTHOR;
AND
DRAWINGS TAKEN FROM NATURE.

Intended for young Persons from ten to fourteen
Years of Age.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR HARVEY AND DARTON,
GRACECHURCH-STREET.

1827.

RH 279

A TOUR
TO
GREAT ST. BERNARD'S

AND MOUNT

St. Bernard's

WITH

DESCRIPTIONS COPIED FROM A JOURNAL



76/1947

PREFACE.

THE little tour of which a narrative is given in the following pages, was made during a short residence at Geneva, a few years since. The descriptions are copied, nearly word for word, from a journal kept by the author, and are such as arose from the feelings of the moment; and the Sketches are copied from those which were drawn in the journal from nature. The information relating to the monastery of St. Bernard's is given as the author received it from the prier; and so is the account from the curé of Contamines. The incidents, and conversations with the guides and natives, are such as actually took place

during the tour; and the journal has throughout been adhered to in all respects, except that it has been cast into the form of letters, the personages of which are fictitious.

The little Map on which the route of the travellers is traced, was sketched by the author, and improved and enlarged by the editors, from authentic sources.

A TOUR, &c.

LETTER I.

William Rose to a friend in England.

GENEVA, August 3.

I AM happy to tell you that my father and mother have decided on making the tour of Mont Blanc. It has always been my father's wish to accomplish it; but he hesitated, for he did not like the thoughts of dividing the party, and he was afraid of my mother's health and of my sister's resolution. We must perform great part of the journey on mules, or on foot; and there are some difficulties attending it,

probably a little occasional peril, and certainly some very bad accommodations; but my mother thinks that her health is quite equal to the undertaking, and Fanny assures him that the courage and steadiness of a girl of fourteen are much greater than he supposes them to be.

We shall be joined by our friend Harry Seymour, who has requested my father's permission to accompany us. He is here with his family, on their return from a tour through Italy; and he will be a delightful acquisition to our party, for he has as much accommodating good-humour as ever, and I think, if possible, more enthusiasm. He is always alive to the beauties of nature, and here we shall see her in her grandest and wildest form—in her most sublime and lofty character.

If I were obliged to live out of England, (which I sincerely hope will never be the case,) I should prefer Geneva to most places which I have seen. The inhabitants are honest and civil, without the superabundant obligingness of the French.

The environs of Geneva are very beautiful; and I love to gaze on the deep blue Rhone, and watch the effect of the light breezes that ripple the transparent surface of the lake. But we have nothing particular to interest us here, and our object in coming abroad was to see different places and countries.

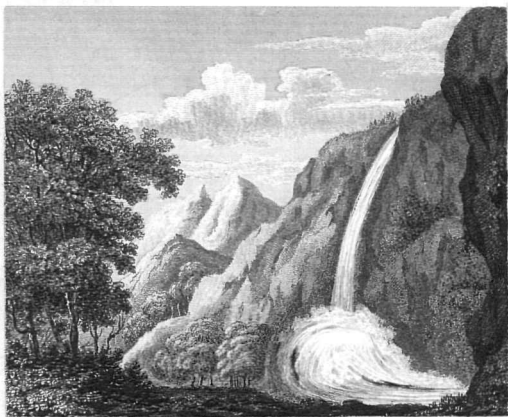
We shall leave Geneva in a few days, and I look forward with great pleasure to our tour, from which I expect to derive delight; and I hope to reap some advantage from the wonderful scenery which I am about to witness. Our party will consist of my father and mother, Fanny and Frank, (both of whom are on the very tip-toe of expectation and rapture,) Harry Seymour and myself. We shall take our carriage and one servant as far as Salanche, and leave them there to await our return.

We are busy collecting together what we shall want, and reducing it into as small a compass as we can: a telescope, a thermometer, a tin box to collect plants

in, and some blotting-paper in which to place them afterwards ; some drawing and writing materials, and as small a wardrobe as we can possibly contrive to manage. We have undertaken, between Harry, my sister, and myself, to write a sort of journal to amuse poor Mr. Seymour, who is in very ill health ; and when I return, you shall have the substance of it. We shall take a small bag, which we call our letter-bag, and we shall put our journal into it, as we write it, and dispatch it to Mr. Seymour by the first opportunity that offers. He removes to Lausanne the day before we leave Geneva.

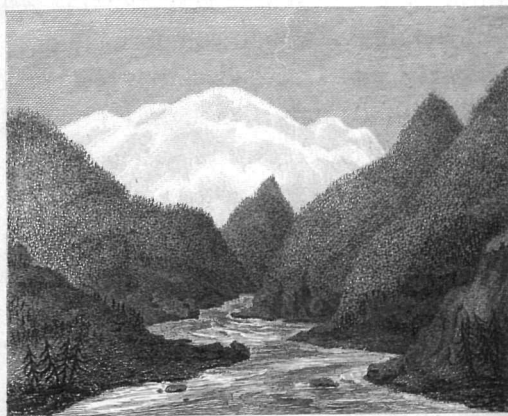
I am ever, yours sincerely,

WILLIAM ROSE.



The Cascade of Nant Arponaz.

Letter 2.



Mont Blanc from the Bridge of Pellissier.

Letter 4.

LETTER II.

Fanny Rose to Jane Seymour.

SALANCHE, August 6.

WE quitted Geneva this morning, with the weather as bright, and nearly as hot, as the summer-sun and a clear sky could make it. We left the Saleve to our right; and I thought, my dear Jane, on the delightful day we spent in climbing that beautiful mountain, when you formed one of the party, and I wished sincerely that you were with us now; though I know that your gentle and dutiful attendance on your sick father will be a source of heart-satisfying reflection, which will compensate you for every privation.

The road wound to the left, and we went through a fine country, varied with wood and mountain, and adorned with some picturesque ruins of castles. I forget

the names of most of them ; but I remember the Chateau de Fossigny, for it struck me as being very beautiful. We stopped to breakfast at Bonneville, a small town, which has nothing remarkable but its situation at the foot of a mountain called the Mole, with the river Arve running through it. The inn has a garden belonging to it, which reaches down to the river : at the end of it there is a kind of alcove, or summer-house, looking upon the water ; and it was delightfully refreshing to sit and breakfast there, after our broiling ride. This summer-house might have been made very pretty, and would have been so, in almost any small inn in England ; and I could not help observing that in my own little garden I would make it beautiful. But they have no taste, in this country, for affording more than shelter and food for travellers : as for providing them with luxuries, it does not enter into their plans or speculations. But this little edifice gave us shelter from the sun, a cool breeze from the river, and a magnificent view of the

Mole, which stands on the opposite side of it; and all this was very agreeable.

From Bonneville to Salanche we went through a country of such extraordinary beauty, that no one, who has once been through it, can ever forget it. After passing the little town of Cluse, we entered the valley of the same name; the Arve flowing on by our side, and the country spread about with luxuriant trees. We stopped at the water-fall of Nant Arpenaz, which is to the left of the road: it falls from an impending rock, and is eight hundred feet high, and broken but in one place. The weather being very still, the foam, after rising to a great height, fell, and united again to form the second cascade. The scenery round it is very rich and beautiful.

On the opposite side of the valley is a fine range of jagged mountains, with peak rising above peak, and constantly varying in form and colour: a rainbow was flitting before them, shifting its hues with the passing vapours. Near to this spot is an

echo, which repeats the sound three or four times: we found a boy stationed here with a small cannon, ready prepared to produce it. I should have preferred his having a horn, or music of some kind: it would have had a much more pleasing effect.

We alighted from the carriage and walked for a considerable way along the valley, which is very luxuriant in shrubs and flowers: the sweet-scented clematis and the barberry grow in great profusion. We found also the wild pink, (*dianthus plumarius*,) the sweet William, (*dianthus barbatus*,) the sweet-scented cyclamen, the gentianella, potentilla aurea, pollygala vulgaris, the campanula, and many other beautiful flowers.

I love so much to loiter about in the beautiful valleys, or to stand still and admire and wonder on the heights of the mountains, that, were I to travel by myself, I believe I should be very long before I reached the end of a journey through such a country as this is. Men have much

the advantage of us females in being able to accomplish journeys on foot, and to wander to what spot they like; but I am very well satisfied (and so I think you will say I ought to be) in travelling as I do; and Frank and I took a delightful ramble in search of flowers, till we were summoned to return to the carriage. I hope I shall bring you back some very pretty specimens of plants.

We crossed the Arve at the pretty little village of St. Martin's, and reached Salanche in the afternoon. And here the sight of Mont Blanc burst upon us with astonishing grandeur. I think it looks like the ghost of some great giant, rather than any thing belonging to this world; and I can scarcely bring my senses to believe that it is at its real distance from me.

Believe me, my dear Jane,

Your affectionate friend,

FANNY ROSE.

B 5

the advantage of us females in being able to accompany journeys on foot, and to wander to what we please; but I am

LETTER III.

How very much I think you will love me as I do: *Henry Seymour to his Sister.*

and I look a delightful rambler. I hope I shall be able to return to the carriage. I hope I shall be able to return to the carriage. I hope I shall be able to return to the carriage.

SALANCHE, August 6.

MY DEAR SISTER,

WE have passed through a succession of enchanting valleys in our way to this place, which we reached in good time; and on entering it we were accosted by a Chamouny guide, who introduced himself to us, and told us that he was just returned from making the tour of Mont Blanc. While our dinner was preparing I took a stroll to look at the church, and was joined by our new acquaintance, whose conversation I found very intelligent; and as his countenance was open and frank, I wished he might be one of the guides on our tour. The church, like most others in this part, is neat and handsome, and ornamented with

more taste and more cost than one would think possible in so poor and so sequestered a country. The guide remained kneeling at some altar while I looked about the church ; and when I had finished, he joined me again.

The people at the inn were a long time preparing our dinner ; and, as we were anxious to get out again, Frank offered his services to walk into the kitchen and remonstrate, and returned laughing very heartily at their method of roasting fowls. The woman endeavoured to pacify him, by telling him that the dinner was almost ready : on which he observed, that he saw no symptoms of a roasted fowl, which was to form part of it. But she said, " Oh ! that has been ready a long time ;" and uncovering a saucepan which stood on the hearth, she showed him the roasted fowl, stuffed into a much smaller compass than it ever had been since it left the egg, and looking as if it had been imprisoned since the day before yesterday.

After dinner we walked up the Mont

Rosset, accompanied by the Chamouny guide. It was a delightful evening: the sun was setting gloriously, and the air had become cool. From the Mont Rosset there is a fine view of the valley and of the Aiguille de Varens, a noble mountain which stands by itself, in stately, unconnected grandeur, so that its whole form, from base to summit, is distinctly seen; and it is beautifully varied with wood, and precipice, and water-fall. The Arve runs at the foot of it, and the pretty village of St. Martin's is in the valley below.

Our new acquaintance was a great acquisition in our ramble, as he was well acquainted with the paths, showed us where to avoid those which are dangerous, and led us to the spots where the finest views are to be seen. We rambled about until evening obliged us to return, which I did reluctantly. I delight in climbing a mountain, regaling myself with the pure air at its summit, and looking over the varied landscape below me; and I never

tire with gazing on the glorious sunset among the Alps.

This inn is a tolerably good one, and it has, what would compensate me for many deficiencies, a kind of balcony which is directly facing Mont Blanc. I have been there, looking with admiration and wonder at this king of mountains; not until I was tired, but until I recollected that a little rest might be useful, to capacitate me for to-morrow's journey.

I have no doubt but that Ariosto and other poets, who have dreamed and sung of magic mountains which continually appeared close, but receded as they were attempted to be approached, took their ideas from snowy mountains. I can with difficulty restrain my imagination, so as not to think that I am close to Mont Blanc; and yet I know that it is forty miles distant. Monte Rosa gives you still more the idea of a magic mountain than Mont Blanc: it stands more by itself, and is more separated by height and figure,

from those alps which are near to it. I have heard it said that York is the lord, and Lincoln the lady of England's cathedrals. Were I to use the same metaphor, I should say that Mont Blanc is the king, and Monte Rosa the queen of the Alps :

That magic mount of heavenly white!

Which human feet have never trod ;

Bright mass of pure unsullied light,

Untainted by our earthly sod ;

Seems what the storied poet feigns,

Enchanted mountain, rising high,

Eluding still the trav'lers pains,

And mocking his deluded eye :

And, wearying his exhausted limbs,

Doth still, as he proceeds, retire ;

And every summit that he climbs,

Presents another summit higher.

Oh, for Rogero's winged steed,

That flew impetuous through the air,

With untired force and winged speed,

To see what magic castle's there :

What mighty wizard holds his court,
What armour'd knights and ladies bright,
In pride of chivalry resort
Upon that mount of heavenly white*!

You know that you ladies like a bit of
poetry in a letter; and I am sure you are
too good-natured a girl to ridicule your
brother's verses, even though they may be
"nonsense verses." Believe me,
Your's affectionately,
HARRY SEYMOUR.

* Since the above was written, Monte Rosa has been
ascended by some English gentlemen.

LETTER IV.

Harry Seymour to his Sister.

CHAMOUNY, August 7.

How vain to hope such art as mine
Can trace romantic Savoy's views !
Her valleys rich in corn and wine,
Her mountains bright with rainbow hues:

Their wild and jagged giant form,
The terrors of the mountain-flood,
As swelling with the swelling storm,
The rich luxuriance of her wood.

How vain ! the form to pencil down
Of that unearthly mountain king,
Whose dazzling front and glittering crown
Have never felt the smile of spring.

Vain, idly vain the attempt must be !
Yet who through scenes like these has been,
And has not tried in vain, like me,
To trace the wonders he has seen ?

Our journey from Salanche yesterday morning was performed in two odd little carriages called chars-à-banc, having one seat, placed lengthways, which holds three persons: they are drawn by two horses, and are so low as to be scarcely raised above the ground. We were accompanied by a second Chamouny guide, who had made himself known to us, and was returning on horseback to Chamouny. He rode by our side, and added much to the day's gratification by his intelligent conversation.

The road winds round the Aiguille de Varens, the Arve flowing rapidly by the side of it: at present it is within its proper bounds, but it occasionally overflows its banks to a vast extent. Every step we took, and every varied view we caught, was beautiful.

We stopped at the village of Chède, and went out of the road to look at a very pretty and picturesque cascade, which falls from a considerable height into a basin which it has hollowed for itself in the

rock. It is surrounded with rich scenery ; and, at the time of our seeing it, its beauty was greatly increased by a brilliant rainbow, which shone over the basin and played upon the foam. On returning to our chars-à-banc, we entered upon a very stony and rough road, or rather lane, which jolted us considerably more than was pleasant, though our vehicle was admirably adapted to the roads it had to travel over. William, Frank, and I alighted, and walked up the lane, which was shaded by high trees, and was delightfully refreshing. It led to the little lake of Chède, of which the water is very transparent, and so cold that no fish will live in it. The high trees which surround it give it a deep green colour, except where the snowy top of Mont Blanc is reflected in it.

We passed over the beds of two torrents, now completely dry, and by the broken masses of an *aiguille* which had fallen about seventy years since, and lay scattered about in dreadful confusion.

Some very pretty shrubs with yellow berries grew among them: the name of them, our guide told us, was *acrosse*; but I believe that the botanical name is *hippopha rhompoides*.

We saw the village of Passy on a hill, half hid among the trees on the left; and the white summits of Mont Jovet on the right, appearing above the gorge of Nant Bourant.

We stopped to breakfast at Servoz. The inn, which is a kind of large farm-house, was full; and I saw seven chars-à-banc there, filled chiefly with English.

We crossed the Arve at the romantic bridge of Pelissier, where the river runs rapidly at the bottom of an abyss, formed by dark rocks; and Mont Blanc is seen in the back-ground, between two mountains, covered with deep-green pines: in the fore-ground, on a height, is the ruined castle of St. Michel. The road then ascends through a forest of pines; and every now and then we caught a glimpse of the river, foaming in the deep ravine below.

It continued beautiful and romantic, sometimes terrific, and sometimes luxuriant, rich in wood and enlivened by hamlets, until we reached the valley of Chamouny.

And here, shall I acknowledge to you, that the first view of the valley of Chamouny disappointed me. I am almost ashamed to say so, because it is so much talked of and so much admired; but so it was. This disappointment was perhaps owing, in part, to the beauty of the scenery we had passed. The valley, at the first view of it, did not appear to be much wooded; and the mountains rise precipitously on either side, so as to leave a straight line of valley, with the river running in the middle of it. The first view of the glacier des Bossons was not so grand as I expected. I was not aware of its magnitude; and it appeared to be made up of sharp pinnacles of ice, of no great size, and of a dirty colour; but on alighting, and ascending the glacier, I was surprised at the immense solid masses, and the tremendous walls of ice of which it is com-

posed. On looking up between them, I observed what you have often heard mentioned before, the very deep blue colour of which the sky appears: it seems as if you were much more distant from it, than when you are in the open air.

Ever dear Jane,

Your affectionate brother,

HARRY SEYMOUR.

LETTER V.

William Rose to Mr. Seymour.

CHAMOUNY, August 7.

MY DEAR SIR,

FROM the terrace of our inn (the London hotel) we have a magnificent view of Mont Blanc. We had only before seen the Dôme de Goûté; but here the Bosse du Dromedaire, the highest part of Mont Blanc, is distinctly seen. I am told that the Dôme de Goûté takes its name from the sun shining on that point, at the time when the inhabitants of the valley take a small meal, between their dinner and supper, which they call goûté.

We arrived in time to take a walk of between two and three hours about the valley. I should have liked to ascend Mont Breven, as the view of Mont Blanc

must be very fine from it; but that was out of the question, and there was plenty to delight and astonish in a walk along the valley. The glaciers, divided by pine-forests and cultivated fields; their never-ceasing variety of form and extension; their deep moraines, with hamlets or detached cottages at the foot of each; the traces of the destructive torrents; and the beautiful verdure of the pasture land: all contrasted so strangely and so wonderfully with each other, that our ideas of the valley of Chamouny rose with every step we took; and even Harry returned fully aware of all its claims to admiration.

In this valley the farms are occupied by the proprietors, and the largest estates are in value from twenty to thirty Napoleons a year. A cow is worth about three Napoleons; a fine sheep from twelve to sixteen francs; a goat rather more than a sheep. Any inhabitant may cut down what tree he likes for the repairs of his house, paying twenty sous to the commune for each tree. As the houses are built and roofed

with wood, they are frequently in want of repairs; the wind being occasionally so violent, in the winter, as to unroof the houses. The roofs are made of three layers of wood: one is placed as rafters; the second is composed of thick chips, laid in great quantities over each other; and these are covered with pieces of wood cut in the shape of tiles, and put on like them: the whole is, in some measure, preserved from the effects of the hurricane by large stones, or blocks of wood, being scattered over them.

A great quantity of wood, cut into planks and ready for repairs, is lying by the side of every house; so that each cottage has the appearance of belonging to a carpenter's premises. They wash the planks with a composition, of which pitch forms the principal ingredient: it stains them of a deep red colour, and preserves them from the wet. Several of the houses are fancifully coloured in patterns, and the effect is very pleasing.

The Savoyards pay a considerable duty

on different articles to the king of Sardinia, who taxes them very heavily, even more so than Buonaparte did. The affairs of each commune or hundred, such as the making and mending of roads, keeping the churches in repair, &c. are managed by a committee of seven men, who have a head over them; and this man refers to a sous préfector, who is answerable to the préfector, and he refers to the states of Sardinia.

Our inn is clean and comfortable, and the people here are become acquainted with the English customs and manners; there being, it is said, eight hundred English persons, upon an average, who visit the valley of Chamouny during the summer.

The discovery of this region, by Mr. Pocock and Mr. Wyndham, in 1741, must have been almost as great an epoch in their history, as the visit of Columbus to America forms in that of the New World.

To-morrow, if the weather is favourable,
we shall ascend Montanvers, and visit the
Mer de Glace.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Yours truly,

WILLIAM ROSE.

LETTER VI.

Henry Seymour to his Father.

CHAMOUNY, August 8.

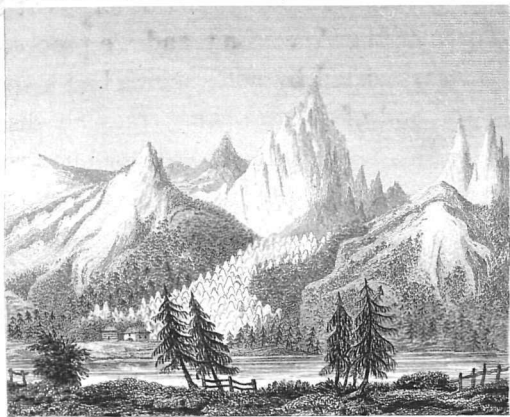
MY DEAR FATHER,

WE breakfasted early this morning, that we might have a long day before us to ascend Montanvers. We were accompanied by the two guides whom we had met at Salanche. The first part of the ascent we performed on mules, and rode for a considerable way through a thick wood of pines. We stopped at a very picturesque well, which our guides told us is the scene of a part of Florian's novel of Estelle; and there we found some children stationed, with milk and strawberries; a most welcome and refreshing repast.

About half way up the mountain the path becomes impassable for the mules,

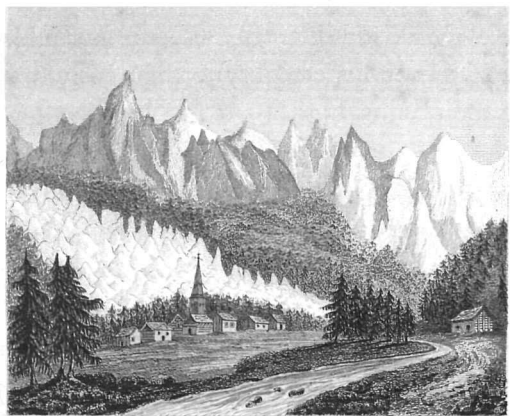
which returned and waited for us at the source of the Arveiron ; and we proceeded on foot, assisted by poles which had a spike at the end of them. The trees all disappeared as we ascended, and not one grows near the small building where we stopped to rest and refresh ourselves, and which has been built expressly for the accommodation of travellers. At this little edifice, which they call the Pavilion, we found some bread and Gruyères cheese. We had brought some wine with us. We rested here a short time.

We then walked to the Mer de Glace, a magnificent glacier indeed ! resembling a tempestuous ocean when the waves run " mountains high." It is a long valley of glacier, surrounded by high and jagged peaks, rising like pinnacles one above the other, and stretching their tall points above the clouds. At the end of it is a green field, called the Garden, in which some sheep are pastured during the summer months ; and the proprietors go to see them about once in every fortnight.



View in the Valley of Chamouny of the Glacier des Bois.

Letter 6.



Argentier.

Letter 7.

The surface of the Mer de Glace, like that of the other glaciers, is dirty, it being the quality of ice to eject all extraneous matter; so that below the surface it is perfectly pure and clean; and, on looking into the chasms, it appears of a clear blue sulphurous colour. I was surprised to see the immense stones which it had forced up on the surface. Some of the chasms are very wide and deep; so deep, that it is some seconds before you hear the stones which you throw in, fall into the water which runs along the bottom. The Mer de Glace is surrounded by enormous rocks, jagged, steep, and bare; but close to the very edge of the glacier, rhododendrons of the brightest crimson grow in great profusion.

With the help of our pointed sticks we walked upon the ice for about an hour; (the principal danger arising from the chasms;) we then visited the place where Mr. Wyndham and Mr. Pocock took shelter for a few days, in 1741, when they were exploring this, then, unknown region. It

is a small kind of cave. We crept under the block of granite which covers it, and found the remains of some burnt wood, which we, of course, decided were the remains of the fire made by these gentlemen. We rested again, a little while, near the Pavilion, and enjoyed the magnificent view of the glacier, and of the Aiguille de Drhu, rising in beautiful majesty directly opposite.

There is something in the form and shape of this valley of ice, which puts me in mind of the valley between Somma and Vesuvius, called the Atrio del Cavallo. I have often observed that fire and water are very similar in the effects of their operations; and that the same form, though varied, may be traced throughout the works of nature.

We now descended to the source of the Arveiron. The river takes its rise under the Glacier des Bois; and having formed for itself an arch of ice of 100 feet high, it rushes through it with unceasing impetuosity. The noise which the torrent

makes in its passage through it, is tremendous. No arch formed by human hands, directed by human skill, could be comparable in grandeur to this splendid workmanship of nature. It was to me so new and so surprising, that I had no words in which to express my astonishment; so I stood gazing, in silent admiration and wonder, until I was forced reluctantly away.

Three gentlemen from Geneva, two of whom were father and son, met with a dreadful accident here a few years since. One of them imprudently fired a pistol towards the arch: it was instantly followed by the fall of a large mass of ice, and the torrent rushed with such violence that escape was impossible. The son lost his life, and the others were thrown on the edge of the torrent, each having a leg broken.

We crossed the river on a rude sort of bridge made of loose planks, and found our mules waiting for us on the other side. The Glacier des Bois, which is an arm

from the Mer de Glace, extends very much every year, and presses with great violence against the earth, which it has forced up into undulations for a considerable distance. A cottage which stands near it will probably fall next year. At the foot of all the glaciers are what they call *moraines*, where the earth is forced up like waves for a great way.

We returned to Chamouny to a late dinner, and did not go out afterwards. The people of the inn brought us some collections of dried plants, and specimens of fossils, which they keep by them for sale; and looking at them has occupied the evening very pleasantly.

We shall set off early to-morrow. The ladies have each a mule, and a guide: the same who accompanied us up Montanvers. Mr. Rose will have a mule for himself, and we shall take another for either William, Frank, or myself to mount when we are tired. Two other guides, who have been recommended to us, will be divided between us; one for the walkers,

and the other for the riders. I shall ride but little: I am too much used to travel, and too fond of rambling among mountain scenery, to add much to the fatigue of the mules.

Our wardrobe is packed in carpet-bags, and is to be fastened behind the saddles; and the side-saddles are to have each a basket hung to the pommel, to carry a little brandy and port wine, with any thing else that may be wanted. Adieu, with love to Jane,

I remain, my dear Sir,

Your affectionate son,

HENRY SEYMOUR.

LETTER VII.

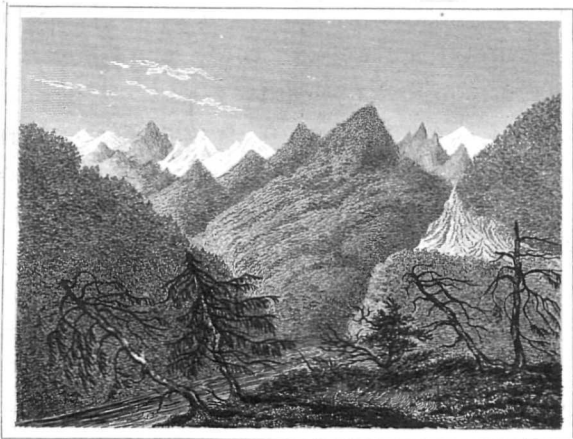
Harry Seymour to his Father.

MARTIGNY, August 9.

MY DEAR FATHER,

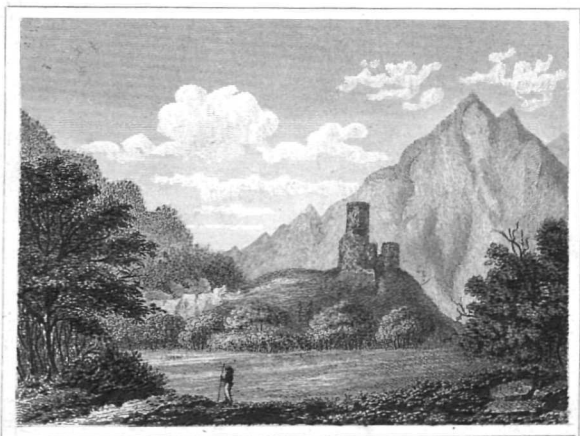
WE left Chamouny this morning, in high spirits and with very bright weather. This end of the valley is very fine, the Arve rushing into it with great impetuosity, over immense masses of rock; and the mountains closing in on both sides, so as to leave just room enough for the torrent, and the road which ascends by the side of it.

The first village which we passed, after leaving Chamouny, was Argentière, situated in a grove of pines, at the foot of the glacier of the same name, and with the Aiguille d'Argentière rising above it. The grass round the village is of a very bright green, and the whole scene is ro-



The Vale of Trient. leading to the pass of the Tête Noir.

Letter 7.



Chateau de St. Michel Martigny.

Letter 8.

mantic and beautiful. The church has a very pretty spire; and there is an appearance of comfort and quiet about it, though it is at the very foot of a glacier. I am surprised to see a village, or at least some cottages, at the foot of all, or almost all of the glaciers, where they must be in continual danger from the avalanches, which you frequently see and hear falling: one, but a small one, fell as we were passing through this little valley, with a noise resembling artillery. Danger which we see from our childhood, and are constantly subject to, we think but little of; or habitations would not be built on the side of Vesuvius or Etna, or at the foot of these tremendous glaciers.

We stopped an hour at the curé's of Argentière, who has a very fine collection of mineralogy: the taste appears almost natural to the inhabitants of this country, who have fine opportunities of cultivating it. He has also an excellent collection of curious and rare plants. He received us with great kindness, and gave us some

cream, and some honey and bread, which were very acceptable.

Our guides here procured some excellent pears and plums, for the carriage of which we found our baskets very convenient.

The road divides here : that to the left goes to Martigny by the Tête Noire. We took the right-hand road, and passed by the village and glacier of Tour, crossed the Arve, and ascended the Col de Balme, where the prospect on both sides is more magnificent than I can describe. Looking over the valley of Chamouny, Mont Blanc stands in superb majesty, the Bosse du Dromedaire rising above the Dôme de Goûté, and a long line of *aiguilles* leading to it. On the other hand, you see the chain of alps as far as Sion ; to the right, Mont Buet covered with snow ; to the left, a high needle called le Croix de Fer, from an iron cross which stands on the top of it. How it came there, no one knows. A few years since, a M. Echère lost his life in a rash attempt to visit it.

He had accomplished his object, and was coming back safe, along the ridge of rock which leads to it, when he suddenly turned back, to fetch something he had left, (it is supposed,) as he had been seen to take out his pocket-book while at the spot where the cross stands: he had not turned back two minutes, when his foot slipped, and he was precipitated down the mountain and dashed to pieces.

The Arve takes its rise on the Col de Balme, which is very dreary, with not a twig growing on it, except rhododendrons; but a number of bright and pretty flowers are thickly scattered about it. A great many cows were feeding here, having bells fastened round their necks with a broad leather band and buckle. On the top of this mountain we passed the boundary-stone between Savoy and Switzerland.

We stopped to take some refreshment at the Châlet des Herbagères, which stands a little on the descent from the Col de Balme; and while our companions

rested themselves, William and I took a ramble. Frank would gladly have accompanied us, but Mr. Rose was afraid he would tire himself too much, and be knocked up before the end of the day.

On our descent, the high needles of the mountains were continually appearing and disappearing above our heads, and gave me the idea of giants stretching their heads over to look at us. After descending for some time through a bare, wild country, we came into a forest of pines, and the path here became so steep and loose that we were obliged to dismount. The mules went on first, and it was quite beautiful to watch how, with instinct almost approaching to reflection, they picked their road; avoiding the loose or slippery stones, and choosing only the firm places to tread upon. The wind had swept in dreadful hurricanes down this forest, and left the tracks of its violence visible on large trees, either torn up by the roots, or cut off at a short distance from the ground; and these had fallen on

others, and bent or crushed them, so as to leave broad paths of desolation down the side of the mountain.

On descending into the valley of Trient, we crossed a torrent by means of immense stones, and the mules stepped with admirable dexterity from one to the other of them. We rested at a châlet, where we made a good dinner on eggs and wine. It is a regular resting-place for travellers, and is therefore better furnished than others which have not that object in view; and it has a small garden behind it, in which there were some herbs.

We here joined again the road which diverged from us at Argentière and went by the Tête Noire.

The ascent from hence, up Mont Fourclay, is very beautiful: the narrow valley of Trient, in which several châlets are scattered, is closed and terminated by mountains covered with dark pines interspersed with snowy tops. The river Trient runs through it, and makes its exit from the valley, by means of a very

remarkable gorge, (William tells me,) between St. Morice and Martigny, which is extremely deep, and just wide enough to admit the foaming torrent.

Towards the top of Mont Fourclay we passed the ruins of a fortress to the right, and went through wild, but rich and woody scenery, until the valley of the Rhone opened upon us with exceeding beauty, from the top of the Pierre Vue. The mountains rise on each side abruptly from the valley, which is of great length and flat, and has that fine rapid river the Rhone winding through it; though not of the deep blue colour which it has at Geneva, but thickened and whitened with mountain snows. Buonaparte did not certainly add to the beauty of the valley, though he improved the means of travelling through it, by making the Simplon road in a straight line in the middle of it.

The descent into the valley is through some rich-looking land; and we caught the view, at intervals, among the luxuriant trees which surrounded us, and which

were chiefly walnut and Spanish chesnut, intermixed with ash and elm.

Adieu, my dear father. I wish that you and Jane could be with us, and partake of the enjoyment this tour affords. Be assured I am very sensible of your kindness in thus indulging me.

I am ever, your affectionate Son,

HARRY SEYMOUR.

LETTER VIII.

Fanny Rose to Jane Seymour.

MARTIGNY, August 9.

MY DEAR JANE,

YOUR brother, I believe, has written you an account of to-day's beautiful journey; but as he and William rambled about during the time that we remained at the Châlet des Herbagères, I will give you an account of that, and of our entertainment there.

The châteaux on these high situations among the Alps are inhabited for four or five months in the summer, while the cattle can pasture within a certain distance of them. Three or four cows, six or seven sheep, and an equal number of goats, form a considerable herd of cattle. Few proprietors have so many; but they rent cows at so much per head, and return

them to the owners when they leave the mountains. As the cows wander about for pasture, it is necessary to fasten bells round their necks, that they may collect them together when they are milked, and to prevent their losing them; and, where the mountains are precipitous, they are staked during the nights.

The peasants rent the mountain, and usually build the chalets themselves, which sometimes consist of two rooms; (one for milk and another for habitation;) but more generally of one large room, at one end of which are the dairy utensils, and at the other the beds. Some of the chalets have a chimney; but they are frequently without one, the smoke making its escape through the apertures of the roof. A table, some benches and wooden stools, wooden bowls and spoons, and a kind of skillet, form all the household furniture of a chalet, besides the dairy utensils, and they are of a very rough kind. A cloak and a cap of skin, with the hair on the outside, very much resembling that which

Robinson Crusoe manufactured for himself, usually hang against the wall.

The Gruyères cheese, which takes its name from a district in the canton of Friburgh, is made likewise in this country. It is not good until it is two years old, and it then tastes like new cheese: that which we have in England, and which is so strong, is four or five years old. The inhabitants of these châlets live chiefly on sour bread, sour curds pressed hard, which have the appearance of soap, and milk which has been several times skimmed; and it is to this very poor manner of living that our guides attribute the unhealthy appearance which they frequently have.

We found the master of the châlet at home, and one of his sons soon came in. They placed before us some cream and curds, with wooden spoons and bowls, which were very nice and clean; and they gave us some rye-bread, which was stale and sour. If I am not mistaken, they bring a stock of bread, when they come

up on the mountains, to last them during the time that they reside in these chalets; and as the bread is made with leaven, it gets very sour before the stock is exhausted.

I wish you had been with us, to see the great variety of beautiful and brilliant flowers which grew on the Col de Balme. I alighted, and was almost afraid of treading, lest I should crush some of them under my feet. My guide was very obliging in assisting me to collect some of them, and I hope I shall not return to you empty-handed. The ground was almost covered with flowers of every bright colour, contrasting one with another. The great gentianella and several smaller gentians, the arnica montana, the aster alpinus, the pretty and delicate mountain pink, and the beautiful gnaphalium dioicum grew in large bunches. I longed to gather them all; and I could almost fancy myself on fairy ground, so enamelled was it with flowers.

There is a great deal of the grass of

Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*) growing about the chalet where we stopped at Trient, and I saw it to-day in some other places; as I did likewise the leopard's bane, (*doronicum*,) and the deep crimson rhododendrons, and many other flowers and shrubs the names of which I do not know.

We have been taking a walk about Martigny, which is a melancholy-looking place, and has none of the picturesque wooden houses that I am so fond of seeing. In the course of our walk we went into a small farm-house, which the mistress seemed to have great pleasure in showing us over. It was very comfortably furnished, and was provided with plenty of bacon and salted mutton, which she shewed my mother, and gave her an account of the manner in which she prepared it. She expressed great astonishment at our crossing the sea, and travelling so far to see her country. "Notre pays n'est pas grande chose," she said. When your brother told her that his

father was a clergyman, she seemed to think he was romancing; and we concluded that she had never heard of protestants, nor of a clergy who married.

The château de Bathia, a picturesque castle, overhanging the Drance, was formerly the residence of the bishop of the Vallais. It appears now to be little more than a ruin; but there is enough left of the building to show that it was once strong and grand. The Drance falls into the Rhone near it. Perhaps the picturesque beauty of it was improved and heightened by an opportune thunderstorm, during which the lightning played about the ruined tower with great effect.

Good night, my dear Jane.

I am ever, your affectionate friend,

FANNY ROSE.

LETTER IX.

William Rose to Mr. Seymour.

MARTIGNY, August 9.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAD often heard of the inundation of Martigny, but had never understood how it happened until to-day : a rush of water, which had been pent back by the fall of an avalanche, from a glacier in the valley of Bagnes, was the occasion of it. A gallery was cut through the ice with immense labour; the engineer having calculated the time at which the water would rise to a certain height, and the time which it would take to cut the gallery to that level; but his calculation, though very near, did not answer, owing to the body of water melting the ice more rapidly than he expected, and at the same

time weakening the barrier, by flowing among the masses of ice at the bottom. It was nearly completed when it suddenly gave way, and the whole body of water rushed at once into the valley. Immense blocks of granite were brought down by the torrent, weighing many tons; houses were thrown down, some human lives were lost, and several heads of cattle. I think they said that seven persons perished, among whom was the master of the inn at which we are.

There is still a line along the church, eight feet from the ground, to which height the waters rose, and which is left as a memorial of the disaster.

Our inn is but indifferent. We have, however, some remarkably fine honey, for which this place, we are told, is famous. The mistress of the inn pleads poverty, and says that they have not yet recovered from the calamitous effects of the inundation.

There has been a pretty violent storm

of thunder and lightning this afternoon ; but it has not cooled the air, as the heat is still dreadfully oppressive ; and the gnats are so troublesome, that sleeping is quite out of the question. If I shut my window, I am in danger of being suffocated ; and with it open, I am half eaten up : so, to escape the consciousness of these miseries, I cannot employ my time and my thoughts better than in writing to you.

The valley of the Rhone has great beauty, but such an air of melancholy stillness as to take off all enjoyment. There is not a bird to be heard in the trees ; no lark soaring and carolling in the air : nothing breaks the stillness but the chirping of the grasshoppers, and a nervous person might be wearied by the incessant noise which they make. You will perhaps laugh at my using such an expression as that of grasshoppers making a noise, but really it is not misplaced. It is the only sound you hear, and in travelling through this valley you never get

rid of it; they chirp so loudly, so incessantly, and are so numerous.

The vines are picturesquely trained on *treillages*; but there are constant marks of desolation, from the torrents which rush down the mountains, and carry away with them the labours of the husbandman. The people in general look unhealthy and dejected, and many have goiters; but I have not seen so many crétins as I expected. It is now pretty well ascertained, our guides told us, that the crétins and goiters are not owing to the snow-water, (as was formerly supposed,) which the inhabitants drink, but to the oppressive heat and stagnant air in the valleys. Those who can afford it, send their children to be brought up on the mountains, until they are ten or eleven years of age, and by this method both complaints are gradually disappearing.

The people in this valley have an idea that it was formerly much more fruitful than it is at present; and I recollect,

when I was at Sion, some time since, being told, by a boy who persisted in the truth of what he said, that, when the Château de Tour was built, wine was so plentiful that the mortar was mixed with it instead of water.

But my memory is running away with me ; for the castle at Sion has nothing to do with the tour of Mont Blanc.

I am, my dear Sir, with respect,

Yours, very truly,

WILLIAM ROSE.

The people in this valley have an idea that it was formerly much more fruitful than it is at present; and I recollect

LETTER X.

Henry Seymour to his Sister.

LIDDES, August 10.

MY DEAR JANE,

WE left Martigny very early this morning, that we might be able to make a long halt in the middle of the day, for our guides to attend mass, it being Sunday.

We followed the course of the impetuous Drance to La Vallette, a pretty village with the houses painted in a kind of fresco, round the windows and down the sides of the walls; and where the curé's house was distinguished from the rest by the superior neatness of its appearance. Indeed, this is the case in all the villages in this part of the country. The wildness of the situation, and the prettiness of the village, are strikingly contrasted; for it is

surrounded on all sides by tremendous gorges, through which the torrents force their way with incredible fury.

We stopped to have some milk, and the woman who supplied us seemed satisfied and thankful for what we gave her in return; but Mr. Rose had no sooner observed that she was one of the few who were so, than she returned to say she had been considering that we had not paid her enough. I do not believe that these people intend to exact or impose, for they give you what you ask for, without hesitation, and without making any sort of bargain; and though, when you pay them, they generally ask for more, they neither look disappointed nor ill-humoured when you refuse to comply with their demand.

Leaving the valley of Bagnes to the left, we passed through a gallery which was cut three years since in the rock; and we continued to follow the course of the river, as it absolutely flew over large blocks of granite with tremendous impetuosity, and with so loud a noise as to

prevent our hearing each other speak. There was but just room for the road by the side of the river, which seemed merely to have made its way through the mountains that rise directly and almost perpendicularly from it: those to the right, thickly wooded with pines and larches; those to the left, strewn over with large masses of rock, which seemed only borne up by each other.

At the end of this gorge are the ruins of a monastery of La Trappe. The monks fled at the time of the revolution, and took shelter in Russia. It is built very close to the mountain; and the rocks, which are piled in frightful confusion directly over it, seem to threaten it with hourly destruction. The torrent foams and roars in the front of it; and perhaps the noise might have been some relief to the stillness which pervades a monastery of La Trappe. Here nature reigns in lone and "untamed majesty;" and the situation, wild and desolate in the

extreme, is well suited to an order who do all but despair.

On leaving this gorge, the country assumed a totally different aspect, and became bright and smiling. As we passed the village of St. Branchier, some very melodious chimes were playing; and one of our guides told me that they were not regulated by clock-work, but played by manual labour, so that the tunes are continually varied. Here we left the valley, and the road ascends the mountains to the right, looking over the well-cultivated vale of Entremont, watered by the Drance, to the left.

We passed through the town of Orsières, whose situation is romantic, and whose tall and richly-ornamented spire is strikingly handsome; and we then proceeded on to this place, leaving the Montagnes de Prose to our right.

We have been joined at breakfast by an English gentleman, who is agreeable and well-informed, and who has walked with us about the village.

The inhabitants of this part of the country have a very singular appearance. My dear Jane, I am afraid you will say that I am very satirical; but really there is something in the cut and figure of the men, that puts me very much in mind of a satyr, and yet they are not ill-looking either. As for the women, they are so like each other, that they all appear as if they were twin sisters. They have all the same broad, flat face; the same small eyes, placed widely apart; and the same honest, good-humoured countenance.

I remain, my dear Jane,

Your very affectionate brother,

HARRY SEYMOUR.

LETTER XI.

Fanny Rose to Jane Seymour.

LIDDES, August 10.

MY DEAR JANE,

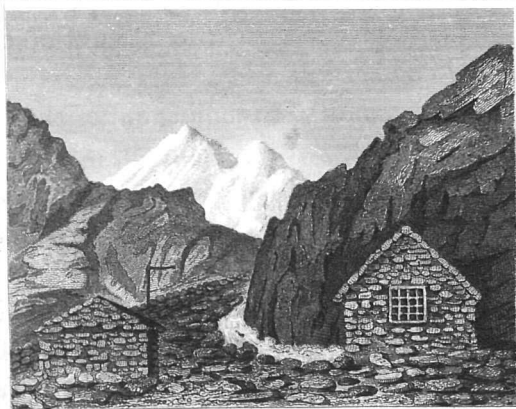
As we have been here some hours, we have had time to walk a good deal about the village; and as we have still half an hour to spare, I hope I shall be able to give you a little account of our ramble.

The peasants were coming out of church, in their Sunday attire, and their whole appearance was neat and decent, with an air of great cheerfulness about them. The men were all, without any exception, dressed in suits of snuff-coloured clothes; and the women had little black hats like pie-dishes, with broad ribbons spread at full width round the almost flat crowns, and



Letter II.

Liddes.



Letter 12.

The Dead-house at St Bernard's.

London. Published by Harvey & Darton, 20th Dec. 1827.

finished at the back of the hats with two bows and ends. Some of the ribbons were ornamented with tarnished gold or silver; and all of them appeared to have been inherited from their ancestors.

Some of the houses at Liddes are painted like those at La Valette; but most of them are my favourite picturesque wooden houses. We went into one of them, and found a very good-humoured looking woman in it, with a large family of children. She showed us about the house, and seemed highly delighted at our admiring the neatness and orderliness of it. And I do assure you it was no flattery, for every thing was very clean and comfortable: the tables and chairs looked very bright, as if they were nicely rubbed; and the brass kettles and pans were beautifully clean and shining.

The good woman seemed to take great pride in showing my mother her eight children, and in telling her all their good qualities. I gave one of the little boys two or three sous, for which she expressed

great obligation, and which she did not seem at all to expect; but we had no sooner left the door, than she sent another of the children after us to ask for more. On our telling her that we had no more, the girl seemed quite satisfied and pleased, and kept walking on with us, chatting away with the most perfect good-humour. She took us into a very large and remarkably neat wooden house, in which the furniture was as bright and shining as if rubbed with the French polish, and the rooms were spacious and commodious.

I followed the girl into this house before the rest of the party, and attempted to enter into conversation with an old man who was sitting by a fire; but he was so deaf that I could not make him understand me. A poor *crétin* then came up, and accosted me with strange kind of gestures, putting her hand on my shoulder. I am almost ashamed to say that I have not yet learned to overcome a very unpleasant sensation, when these unfortunate creatures come close to me; and I was glad to see

my father and mother come in. They made some kind signs to her, allowed her to shake their hands, and gave her a little money. She shook it about in her hands, and looked quite delighted. Indeed, I felt quite ashamed of myself, and determining to overcome my weakness, I patted her on the shoulder; on which she ran and fetched me a flower, and we parted very good friends.

Our little companion then took us towards the church, and I was quite struck with the pretty house of the curé, in a garden filled with beautiful flowers, among which were the finest hollyhocks I think I ever saw. It is a small, square house, the roof narrowing to a point on the top, which is terminated by a chimney: it is white-washed, and has a border painted in fresco, round the windows and down the sides of the house. In the neighbourhood of London, I might, perhaps, have thought that this parsonage had rather a cockney appearance; but in such a wild, remote situation as this, there is something very

pleasing in the taste and neatness with which it is tricked out.

Here our little companion left us, and I made her very happy by giving her a bow of ribbon from my cap.

The church is a large, handsome edifice, and appears to be in excellent order. While we were standing looking at it, we were accosted by the curé, who, with great politeness, invited us into his house. He showed us his collection of minerals and fossils, and we regretted that we could not spare more time to look at them. He has a good library, which he seemed to have much pleasure in showing my father. He is a man of a very cultivated mind; and he told us that he associates very much with the ecclesiastics of St. Bernard's, and visits them frequently.

I could not help expressing to my father my wonder that this gentleman, so accomplished in his mind and so polished in his manners, should be so perfectly happy and contented in a place where he could find so few companions, and where he lives

alone, secluded from almost all the world ; but my father very justly replied, that it was a strong instance of the possibility of being happy in any situation, and under any circumstances, when we feel that we are doing our duty.

My dear Jane, my thoughts reverted to you.

Ever yours, most affectionately,

FANNY ROSE.

LETTER XII.

Henry Seymour to his Father.

ST. BERNARD'S, August 10.

MY DEAR FATHER,

ON leaving Liddus we lost sight of the river: it disappeared to the right, running between high, shady precipices. We passed the village of St. Pierre, the last fortress in Switzerland, going through an old gateway. Near to this place is a very fine cascade, formed by the Valsorey, which takes its rise under the glacier of the same name.

Here the wood entirely disappears, and every thing around is wild, grand, and dreary. We passed a little rocky plain, called the Sommet de Rou, with the glacier de Menon; and above it Mont Velan, covered with snow.

Mr. Rose here called us together, to

look at a remarkable appearance in the sky. The sun was setting: a steep mountain stood between the setting sun and a cloud, or rather a range of clouds, which moved on rapidly, and on which the shadow of the mountain fell. As the clouds moved on, they formed a kind of pageant that was very singular: the jagged peaks, largely and strongly reflected, moved from one cloud to another in quick succession.

Over Mont Velan is a very dangerous pass, which is only practicable during ten days or a fortnight in the summer. It is said that Calvin escaped by this pass from the Cité d'Aoste, into the valley of Bagnes, and from thence to Geneva.

As we ascended, the country became, if possible, more wild and dreary. The path went sometimes by the side of the cataract, and sometimes over bare and rugged rocks, until we came to two small, rude buildings of rough stones: in one of them are placed the bodies which are found by the dogs of St. Bernard's; and methods

are used to restore them. If these fail, they are then removed to the other building, with their clothes on, in order that they may be recognised by their friends. I looked in at the open lattice-work of the window, and saw two bodies, placed on a bier, on a table in the middle of the room. One of them, I am told, has been there two years; the excessive cold preventing it from becoming putrid.

A little further on is a direction-post, which consists of a black hand and arm, fixed at the top of a high pole, the hand pointing to the convent. All their direction-posts are like this; and they are very well calculated for the place and situation, as the black hand and arm must become very visible when the country is covered with snow.

We then wound round a high, steep rock, by a rude, stony path; after which we crossed a large patch of snow, which had fallen a few days before; and in crossing it, the convent of St. Bernard appeared in sight, with Mont Velan rising

to the right, and Mont Mort to the left of it.

We were very kindly and hospitably received by the superior and other ecclesiastics of St. Bernard's; and found a bright wood fire and a hot supper very comfortable. We were twenty persons at table. The company consisted of a mixture of English, French, and Germans: the prior and five of the other monks formed part of the number. There were no ladies but those of our party. The dinner or supper consisted of soup, stewed meat, some very good pastry, and a few vegetables, among which were French beans and salad: the latter the produce of a little garden belonging to one of the monks. Towards the end of the dinner, a glass of muscat was handed round: it is made in the valleys of Piedmont.

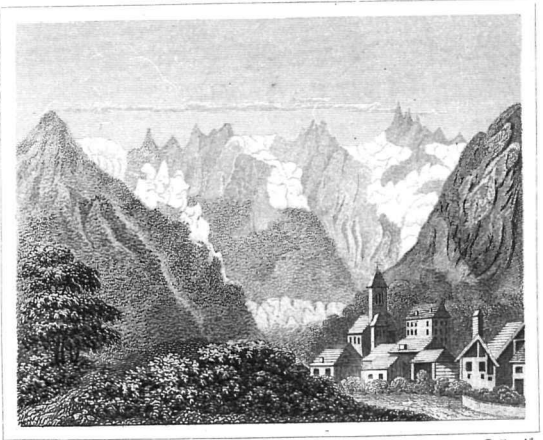
The prier is a very pleasing, mild-mannered man, with ill health, which obliges him to remove to Martigny, and reside there during the winter. Indeed, none of the ecclesiastics are able to stay

over the winter at St. Bernard's, after the age of forty, they become so much afflicted with rheumatism. This is not to be wondered at; for the situation is not only very cold without-doors, but the building is out of repair, and wanting in comforts within, for such a winter residence. The few luxuries they have, consist chiefly of presents which have been made to them, in return for kindness and hospitality received.

I remain, my dear father,

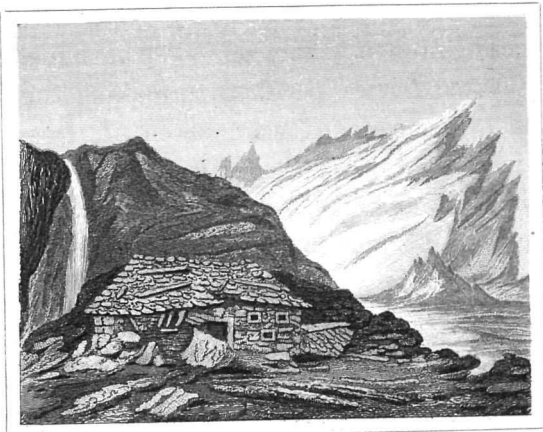
Your affectionate son,

HARRY SEYMOUR.



Letter 13.

Courmayeur.



A Chalet near the Col du Bonhomme.

Letter 20.

LETTER XIII.

Harry Seymour to his Father.

ST. BERNARD'S, August 11.

MY DEAR FATHER,

AFTER dinner the superior was so kind as to give us an account of Buonaparte's passage this way, with his army, consisting of seventy thousand men, several regiments of cavalry, and fifty pieces of cannon. Only one French soldier and three horses perished in making this pass. The cannons were taken off from their carriages, and lodged in fir-trees hollowed for the purpose: they were thus drawn up by four thousand of the native peasants, who were made conscripts, and harnessed two abreast, to the number of seventy to each cannon, with ropes, holding a strong stick across from one to the other, to enable them to draw evenly.

The transportation of the army began at the end of May, when the whole road was covered with snow ; and it was finished at the latter end of July. All the army respected the convent, only asking for refreshments as they passed ; and each man had a piece of bread and a cup of wine given to him. Buonaparte remained at St. Bernard's three hours, took some refreshment, and behaved with great personal civility to all whom he saw there.

The monastery was at that time surrounded with snow ; and when that is the case, the sound is so faint, that a cannon which the French fired as they passed, was not heard by the monks who were at chapel. The battle of Marengo was fought shortly afterwards ; and general Dessaix, who lost his life there, was brought to St. Bernard's to be buried. His tomb, which is in the chapel, is an allegorical piece of sculpture, without inscription ; Buonaparte having intended to write the epitaph himself.

During the time which elapsed between

the passing St. Bernard's and the battle of Marengo, Buonaparte amused himself with taking a ramble along the north of Italy. You may remember, my dear Sir, that, being unwell, you remained at Arona while we visited the islands in the Lago Maggiore. I recollect our being shown at the Isola Bella, a very large laurel-tree, as large as a good-sized elm, on which Buonaparte had cut the word "Battaglia" with his knife. It is shown by the gardener, among the curiosities of the Boromeo Islands; but it is very poor payment for the loss of that beautiful castle at Arona, which Buonaparte razed to the ground, saying it was too strong a place for a subject to possess. It must have been an object of great pride to the Boromeo family, on account of its strength; and of veneration, as having been the birth-place of San Carlo Boromeo.

Near to St. Bernard's is a rock, which has been called Marengo from time immemorial.

It is said that Buonaparte was not the

first who led on an army by this difficult road, for that an uncle of Charlemagne conducted thirty thousand men this way into Italy, in 755.

This monastery is situated on the edge of a small lake, immediately on the pass between Switzerland and Piedmont. It was built at the end of the tenth century, by St. Bernard, Conte de Manthon, near Anacy in Savoy. The same family have continued to possess and live in the Château de Manthon ever since, until the French revolution, when it was disposed of as public property. After the period of the revolution it was repurchased by the family; and the present Conte de Manthon has rebuilt the chapel, and had it consecrated on St. Bernard's day, by two ecclesiastics of this monastery, who repaired there for the purpose.

I have heard, that this establishment has never recovered the effects of the extraordinary expenditure brought upon them by the French revolution.

William, myself, and the young Eng-

lishman whom we met yesterday at Liddes, rose early this morning and ascended Mont Velan; having been furnished with a guide by the kindness of the monks, and being accompanied by two of their noble dogs. The view is very fine; but I do not think that Mont Blanc looks so well from it as from the Col de Balme. If you would see a mountain to advantage, you should climb another of half its height, as near to it, and with as few intervening objects as possible: you are then, and only then, aware of its altitude and magnitude.

The thermometer, this morning, was at 49: the night before, at Martigny, it was at 79.

Adieu, my dear father. I am ever,

Your affectionate son,

HARRY SEYMOUR.

LETTER XIV.

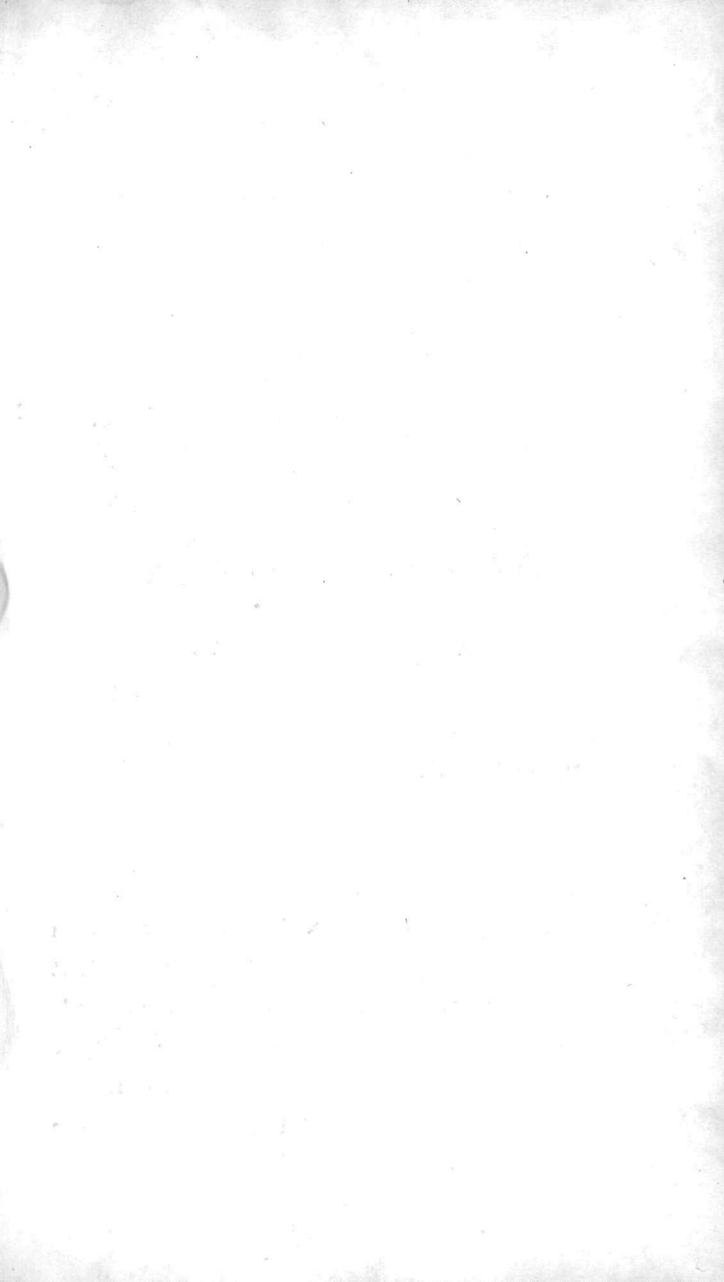
Fanny Rose to Jane Seymour.

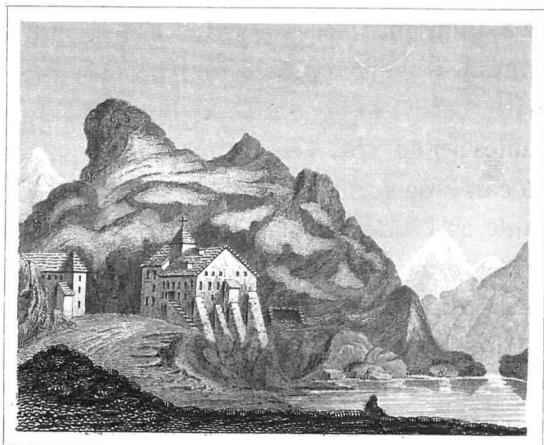
ST. BERNARD'S, August 11.

MY DEAR JANE,

I AM more delighted than I can express with my visit to St. Bernard's. Every thing I have seen is so surprising!—so wonderful! We arrived here to a late dinner yesterday, and nothing could exceed the kindness with which we were received and treated. Our dinner passed very pleasantly, with great attention to politeness and good manners. My mother and I had the honour to sit on each side of the prier. He explained to her, with great affability, the domestic management of the convent; and as I listened very attentively, I think I shall be able to give you the substance of the conversation.

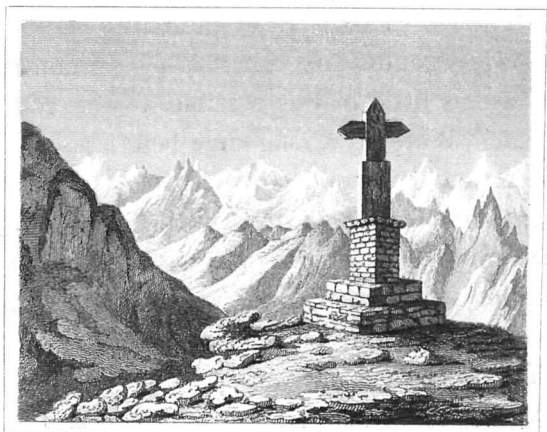
The establishment costs about seventy-





The Convent of St. Bernard.

Letter 14.



The Cross at St. Bernard's.

Letter 15.

five thousand francs a year. They entertain all travellers gratis, and provide them with every thing, except hay for their mules; and this the visitors are expected to carry up for themselves. We hired a mule at Liddes, to carry up the provender for ours. The fuel at St. Bernard's is brought from a place seven leagues off, where there is a forest, the property of the convent. They bring it on the backs of thirty strong horses, which they train and keep for that purpose, and which go, by turns, every day during the summer.

Their bread is made at the Cité d'Aoste, nine leagues distant; for it is a great object to use as little fuel as possible at the convent. Water is a long time before it boils here, and consequently their meat takes a considerable time in dressing. Their cows are milked, and their butter and cheese made, at a hamlet which we passed about two miles from the monastery; and all their provisions are brought up on mules, except their meat, which is killed at the convent. They kill a cow every week.

They entertain about four hundred persons at dinner on Sundays, when the weather allows them to come from the neighbouring villages.

St. Bernard's is eight thousand feet above the level of the sea, and is the highest inhabited spot in Europe. They are seldom a week without snow, at any time of the year. They never have thunder ; but they frequently hear it rolling below them.

We separated at an early hour after dinner ; and my mother and myself were very comfortably lodged in a neat, clean apartment, with two excellent beds and eider-down quilts. There were double casements to the windows, to protect us from the cold ; and my mother observed that, though strict and self-denying towards themselves, the ecclesiastics of St. Bernard's spare no pains to provide comforts for their guests.

After an excellent night's rest, I rose early to take some sketches ; but it was so cold that I could with difficulty hold my pencil. I was soon joined by Frank,

with whom I had made an engagement to take a ramble before breakfast. Frank and I have always been companions from our earliest childhood ; and he is so nearly of my own age, and so good-natured and accommodating to me, so ready to assist me in all my pursuits, that I do not know what I should do without him. It was a very bright morning ; and a number of beautiful flowers, which clung to the rocks, were sparkling with the frost, while the snow lay about, in large patches, in every direction. Frank climbed about the rocks to gather plants for me, where I could not possibly have gone myself.

The monastery consists of two irregular buildings, which are propped up by large buttresses, particularly on the side towards the lake. You ascend to the door of the principal building by a flight of several steps, the snow in the winter reaching, occasionally, even above that height. Some gardens, of about nine or ten feet square, are placed in little sheltered spots by the monks, who amuse themselves in forming

them of earth which is brought from a considerable distance on the backs of mules; but no vegetables will grow in them except lettuce and spinach, and these in very small quantities. They have tried to plant potatoes, but they could not succeed: probably there was not a sufficient depth of earth for them.

On our return we found the party assembled for breakfast, and had a neat and comfortable meal; during which a Polish gentleman, who was travelling on foot with two guides, played some beautiful airs of his own composing, on a piano forte which had been presented to the monks by an English gentleman, and which was in very good tune.

After breakfast we saw the chapel. It is neat, but not much ornamented. A box was hung against the wall, with the words *pour les pauvres* written on it, in which all those who can afford it, put some remuneration for their entertainment at the convent.

The gentlemen visited the library, but

women are not permitted to go into it. Our kind hosts showed us a cabinet of natural history, and some relics which were found on the site of a temple of Jupiter, that stood formerly by the side of the lake near the Hospice.

Some of the gentlemen have ascended Mont Velan: the rest of the party are going to stroll about the premises; and I hope I shall be able to write you a few lines more before I leave this place.

I am, my dear Jane,

Yours ever,

FANNY ROSE.

LETTER XV.

Fanny Rose to Jane Seymour.

ST. BERNARD'S, August 11.

MY DEAR JANE,

WE were accompanied in our ramble by one of the monks, who seemed to have the principal direction of the domestic affairs, and whose manners are those of a man of the world. It was an odd contrast to hear him, wrapped in a cowl, and in this wild and dreary spot, talk of the opera and other amusements at Paris. After a little while we were joined by the prier. They were so kind as to call some of the dogs, which continued with us during our walk. We had three of these mild and noble animals with us. They are large and strong, with fine coats of a fawn colour, spotted with white; and are dis-

tinguished by a particular form of the nose. They are very gentle and good-tempered.

These sensible creatures will discover bodies that are buried six feet deep in the snow; and when they meet with travellers who have lost their way, will conduct them to the Hospice, leading them, by safe paths, over the snow. They are sent out in pairs. One of them has a small barrel of wine, and a basket containing some bread, fastened to him; and the other has some garments. The servants of the convent, and sometimes the monks themselves, go in search of travellers, with the dogs.

I saw one of these dogs in London, at the place where the models of Switzerland were exhibited; but though it had the form and colour of these, yet it looked quite a different animal. There it was languishing and dying with heat; but here, in their native mountains, they are all life and joyous spirit, and range the country

with the freedom, though not the fierceness, of the lion.

Formerly, before the roads over Mont Cenis and the Simplon were made, a vast many travellers passed this way, and the dogs were the means of saving a great many lives ; but at present the number of travellers, excepting those who come, like us, from motives of curiosity, is comparatively small. Still they save many persons' lives, even now.

We saw six horses arrive, loaded with wood ; the regular number that are sent during the summer. The wood was fastened on their backs in a very peculiar manner, with a strong stick, crossways, to keep it steady.

During our walk, the prieur picked up a bit of crystal and gave it to me. I shall treasure it up, as a remembrance of my visit to this place, and of his kindness. I picked up some bits of crystal likewise, and gathered some beautiful flowers. Though not a blade of grass grows within some miles of this place, yet the rocks are

thickly sprinkled with bright flowers; and when the monks saw me gathering them, they very obligingly brought me a great profusion. I reckoned five sorts of gentians; one of which, I was told, will not thrive unless in a situation five thousand feet above the level of the sea. It is very small, grows in clusters, and is of a very bright blue. There are several sorts of campanulas; some beautiful little saxifrages; several sorts of violets: one that I particularly observed had the middle petal jagged. The myosotis, the erigeron uniflorum, pedicularis rostrata, the aster alpinum, gnaphalium dioicum, imperatoria, (master wort,) the mountain pink, several sorts of geraniums, and many more, too numerous to mention, were glittering and shining on the bare rock, where there appeared nothing to nourish them.

I here found my little miniature pallet very useful, as it enabled me just to colour a single flower, or petal of a flower, so as to guide me in finishing the rest at my leisure.

We have been very kindly provided with an early dinner; but I own I felt some awkwardness in eating of the good things set before us, when I observed that the monks did not partake of the meat; it being, I suppose, a fast-day. In a quarter of an hour we shall take our leave; but I shall long remember, with pleasure and gratitude, the courtesy and hospitality with which we have been received and entertained by the superior and other ecclesiastics of St. Bernard's.

I remain, my dear Jane,

Yours affectionately,

FANNY ROSE.

LETTER XVI.

Harry Seymour to his Father.

CITÉ D'AOSTE, August 12.

MY DEAR FATHER,

WE left the hospitable convent of St. Bernard's about two o'clock ; passed along the edge of the little lake, and by the site of a temple to Jupiter, which once stood near the spot where the convent is now erected : a magnificent situation for a temple in honour of Jove, who would here literally tread the thunder under his feet.

We then came to a large, rough cross, which is placed on a high stone pedestal, close to the boundary-stone between Switzerland and Pièdmont, and on the very edge of the pass, to serve as a beacon, which must be seen for a great many

miles over Italy. I have seldom seen this sacred emblem so finely and appropriately made use of.

From hence we made a rapid descent, through wild and bleak scenery, into Pièdmont, and soon met some Italian peasants, who accosted us in a *patois* which we could not understand. We stopped for a few minutes at the village of St. Remi, where there is a fortress resembling that at St. Pierre. Here a boy threw himself from a wall, and appeared to be in a fit; but we found that it was all pretence, to obtain money, and this discovery made, you may well suppose that it did not answer the end intended.

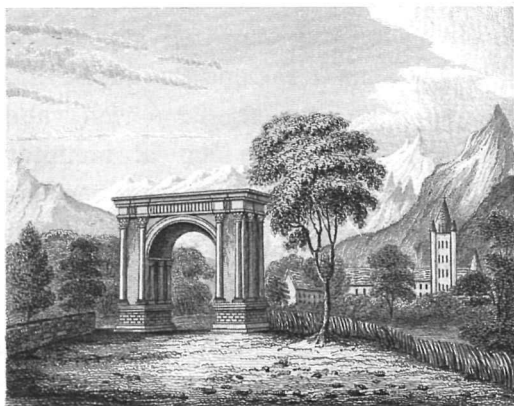
From hence we entered a rich valley, in which were some conical mountains covered with pines; and we continued passing through a very rich country for some miles. A great many locusts, with their bright red and green wings, were hopping and flying about with incredible quickness.

We met a strange caricature of a man,



The Church of S.^t Helena in the Valley d'Aoste.

Letter 16.



The triumphal Arch at the Cité d'Aoste.

Letter 15.

riding over the country in some official capacity, who appeared to excite great deference in the minds of the inhabitants. He and his horse were both galloping, with all their might and main, at the rate of about two miles and a half an hour, and the horse was so shaped and caparisoned as to look very much like a rhinoceros. The rider was dressed in a uniform of blue and red. His well-powdered head and enormous pigtail were surmounted by a cocked hat of the size of an ordinary canoe; and his whole dress so loaded with buttons and gold lace, as must have been very oppressive in this warm climate, at this warm season. Poor man! I felt glad that I was not riding about in the service of the king of Sardinia.

The road now went along the sides of some mountains, which were cultivated to their summits, and have a succession of beautiful valleys to the left. We passed through the village of St. Owen and Etrouble, and stopped for a few minutes near the little chapel dedicated to St. Pen-

talion, to enjoy one of the finest views I ever saw : St. Bernard in the distance, and a range of Alps leading to it, while the near country was smiling and luxuriant as nature and cultivation could make it.

We arrived towards evening at the Cité d'Aoste, a handsome town, situated in a valley of surprising beauty. The sun was setting, and tinged the snowy mountains with a bright rose-colour. We had time to walk about the place and look at some Roman antiquities ; among which are the ruins of an amphitheatre, and a very elegant triumphal arch of Augustus, from whom this city (formerly Aosta) takes its name. The arch has now a crucifix suspended from the middle of it.

The Cité d'Aoste was the birth-place of Anselm, the haughty prelate of Canterbury, who refused to do homage to Henry the First.

The manners and appearance of the people underwent a visible change, on leaving Switzerland, becoming noisy and familiar. This inn is pretty good : the

rooms are large. The latticed casements, and the walls painted with landscapes and figures in fresco, tell us that we are in Italy. Our guides, who are Savoyards, are very much prejudiced against the inhabitants. "C'est une vilaine race," one of them said to me; and added, with great seriousness, "Fermez vos chambres : gardez les clefs." They have brought us a book from the police, in which to insert our names, ages, professions, &c. which we had not been required to do before since we began this tour.

No English person can travel abroad without being struck with the great difference between the peasants of England and those of the continent. You see some very pretty young French women, you see some models of beauty in Italy, and you meet with some good-looking peasants in other countries; but all these are only occasionally seen. For one pleasing object, you meet with ten or twenty that are disagreeable, not to say disgusting; and in those countries which I have hap-

pened to go through, I have never yet met with the general healthful, comfortable, handsome appearance of our English peasantry.

With kind love to Jane, to whom I shall write my next dispatch, and who I am sure will approve of my English feeling,

I remain, my dear father,

Your affectionate Son,

HARRY SEYMOUR.

LETTER XVII.

Harry Seymour to his Sister.

COURMAYEUR, August 13.

MY DEAR JANE,

I WISH I could do justice to the beautiful scenery we have gone through to-day, or even give you an image of it on paper, half as bright or half as vivid as that which remains impressed on my memory. I do not wonder that the inhabitants of mountainous countries are attached to their native land; for while the remembrance of a flat, though ever so rich country, passes by with the passing scene, the reflection of the high and varied mountains remains strongly and forcibly stamped on the imagination.

The sun had but just risen when we left the Cité d'Aoste, making, as we went along, a preparatory breakfast on some

delicious grapes and pears which we procured on our way. The road from St. Remi had been very picturesque, and we had passed through an exceedingly fine country; but from the Cité d'Aoste to Courmayeur it has been replete with beauty of every kind, more than I can describe, or those who never saw it can fancy. It has gone through a narrow, winding vale, luxuriantly wooded, chiefly with chestnut and walnut-trees; and watered by streams which gush from the mountains, and sprinkle about in every direction, as if they fell from the wheel of a mill. The Doria, a rapid river, ran by the side of the road, which was sometimes on one side of it, and sometimes on the other.

The mountains which close in this smiling valley are cultivated to their summits with terraces of vineyards, interspersed with picturesque ruins of castles, with gentlemen's villas, and neat villages with tall white spires. The vines are trained to rows of white pillars, and hang in festoons from one pillar to another,

forming terraces of shady walks. Above these cultivated mountains the higher Alps show their glittering snowy heads, and complete the varied beauties of the landscape.

With what profusion has nature scattered her gifts over this beautiful valley! How shall I venture on the dark side of the picture! As if she was afraid of doing injustice to the rest of the world, she has placed, as inhabitants to this lovely spot, a race of such ill-looking people as I never saw elsewhere. Large goiters, wrinkled, coppery complexions, short bodies with long arms, and flat, coarse features, form the invariable portrait of the peasants in the valley d'Aoste. The whole population seemed to consist of old persons and children. There was scarcely a young-looking man or woman. Now, my dear Jane, if you will not look serious at me, I will tell you what came into my head. I could not help thinking, that if it had gone a step

further, Æsop's fables must have been realized, and the very animals of the field would have talked to us.

Fair Italy! on every side
Has nature, with a spendthrift's hand,
Spread charms unbounded, far and wide,
Over thy bright and lovely land.

Fair Italy! thy laughing plains,
Thy fruitful hills, and mountains high,
Are far beyond what poet feigns,
E'en in his wildest ecstasy.

Beneath thy sky of blue serene,
Sweet are thy flow'rs, and bright their bloom;
Thy streams are swift, thy groves are green,
And zephyrs breath their soft perfume.

Alas! for what alone remains
Th' unfinished part of nature's plan!
For she, a niggard of her pains,
Seems scarcely to have thought of man.

He shines indeed in works of taste,
But low he sinks in moral worth;
By superstition's load debased,
Which shackles freedom from her birth.

I would not give our decent homes,
Our active minds, and open hearts,
For all the taste that decks thy domes,
The painter's and the sculptor's arts.

Nor change my honest native land,
Though less of beauty there may be,
Her generous faith, and friendly hand,
For all thy charms, fair Italy!

I remember our friend Mr. ——— telling us, that when he was travelling through the valley d'Aoste, his appetite entirely left him, and the sight of the people made him quite sick. I then thought the account exaggerated, but I do not think so now; and I can believe, that an English person remaining in this enchanting valley would completely lose his appetite, when his meals were dressed, and he was waited upon, by these unfortunate-looking and dirty people.

We passed a church, very near to the road, dedicated to St. Helena, which had a building attached to it resembling a chapter-house: the edifice as well as the situation was very picturesque.

We breakfasted at Livrogne, a small town, whose situation is as charming as the place is filthy. We were at a dirty sort of inn, or resting-house, where we could not procure coffee or milk, so we substituted eggs and wine. Every thing about the house was comfortless, and I was glad to exchange it for the soft air and almost magic beauty of the valley d'Aoste.

Our guide told us, that a great deal of oil is made from the walnuts in this valley; and it is very good, though not so much esteemed as that which is made from the olives. The walnuts are bruised with their shells, and put into a kind of skillet, on a slow fire, when the oil rises to the top: the fire is kept at the same temperature for several hours.

About two miles before we arrived at Courmayeur, we left the beautifully-situated town of St. Didier on our left hand, in a valley leading to the pass of the little St. Bernard. The baths at St. Didier are much frequented.

During the last two days, I have seen a great deal of the grass of Parnassus, the the woolly cinneraria, and the meadow-saffron (*colchicum*.)

I am ever, my dear Jane,

Your affectionate brother,

HARRY SEYMOUR.

LETTER XVIII.

William Rose to Mr. Seymour.

COURMAYEUR, August 13.

MY DEAR SIR,

COURMAYEUR is situated in a small, deep valley, with three large and many smaller glaciers descending into it. We arrived here this afternoon, after a very beautiful and a very broiling journey. The situation is surprising and singularly romantic, but to live here would be melancholy beyond description: the atmosphere is suffocating, and there is a great quantity of flax growing in the neighbourhood, the smell of which is very unpleasant. Close to the town, and even among the houses, are large flax-pits; and the air in this deep valley being much confined, the whole place and its environs

smell of them. Even the bed-rooms where we are to sleep, look into flax-pits.

I see a number of women employed in bringing in the flax, and carrying immense loads on their heads, looking worn out with heat and fatigue. The baths, which are about a mile from the inn, are strongly impregnated with sulphur. We walked to them, with the intention of making use of them "pour nous delasser." We found them dark and dirty-looking, and prepared by dirty-looking men, with their sleeves tucked up at the elbows, like our blacksmiths. The sight of these officiating water-sprites altered my mother's and sister's intention, and they quickly decided on giving it up.

It is an odious sight to see the women labouring in the fields, and the men doing the domestic work.

The church here is handsome, and lighted with several lamps and tapers. Behind one of the doors was a figure which startled me for the moment, for it

was just like one of the Indian idols; and I was not sure whether it was dead or living, until it muttered out something. I suppose it was some poor creature doing penance.

The people here seem noisy and quarrelsome. Our guides say they have great difficulty in getting any refreshments. We have, however, procured some bread to take with us, as we are not likely, for a day or two, to meet with any but the rye-bread, which is two or three months old, and of course very sour.

I am just come in with Fanny, who has been taking a sketch. While she was sitting on a large stone, in order to do it more conveniently, two women came and stood over her, appearing to be greatly amused; looking at her drawing, and talking to her with great familiarity, while they occasionally took the diversion of hunting and catching the little black animals that were hopping about each other's necks.

The mountains which close in the town

of Courmayeur are stupendous and magnificent, alternately covered with glaciers and pine-forests; the Aiguille du Géant rising in giant majesty above the other peaks. I should like very much to stay a few days at this place, to explore the wild and romantic vale of Ferret, and to have a nearer view of the superb and stupendous glaciers that descend on this side of Mont Blanc; but the season is too far advanced to admit of our staying on the road. Were we earlier, a week spent here would be well bestowed; for scenery like this we can never behold again.

There is a fine, though somewhat dangerous pass, over the Col de Ferret to Chamouny; but I am told that some ladies have gone that way.

We have had some very good specimens brought to us, the produce of the neighbouring mountains, some of which we purchased; but our travelling equipage does not afford much spare room.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Yours, very faithfully,

WILLIAM ROSE.

LETTER XIX.

Henry Seymour to his Sister.

CHAMPIEU, August 14.

MY DEAR JANE,

TO-DAY'S journey has been a striking contrast to that of yesterday. This has been as wild and terrific, as that was luxuriant and beautiful; but I have been equally enraptured with both. A very narrow pass from Courmayeur led us up through a thick forest of pine-trees, leaving the heights of Mont Melée to the left, the vale of Ferret very far to the right. We soon turned our backs on it, and continued descending, with a view of the glacier de Brentva to the right. The river Doria runs under it, foaming and roaring, and forms an arch of ice very much resembling that at the source of the Arveiron. At the top of this glacier is a

wonderful wall of ice, of very considerable length.

At the further end of the glacier de Brentva there are some lead and copper-mines, worked during the summer, by people who inhabit châteaux near them for the purpose, during that part of the year which will allow of their remaining there.

Here a cataract had carried away our path, and our leading guide left us, to look about for another. He looked anxiously for a few minutes, but soon fixed on what direction to take; and his decision made, he hurried us forward.

From a scene of devastation we entered the lovely valley of Veni. It looked like fairy land; so gay, so bright, and so verdant, enamelled with flowers and sprinkled with pines; while every thing around it was so dreary, that it seemed to be the shipwreck of nature.

There is nothing, perhaps, that catches the senses, (if I may use such an odd term,) and strikes the imagination with

such wonder, as the sudden contrast of savage and smiling scenery, which continually occurs in travelling among the Alps, each extreme adding beauty and poignancy to the other.

I longed to loiter an hour in this valley; but in this journey one is not allowed to loiter, there being none but the regular resting-places, and an hour squandered in the morning would be felt as a great loss at night-fall.

I gathered some delicate little lilac auriculas in this valley: it was the only place in which I saw them. And there were several of the beautiful Apollo butterflies, with their bright wings, spotted with scarlet and black, flying about in it.

On leaving this valley, we crossed a bridge of ice over the torrent. The riders dismounted, and our guides hurried us over it so quickly as to put the ladies quite out of breath; and when we were all landed on the other side, some of the guides returned and drove over the mules. We then went up a shaley and somewhat

dangerous path, with a steep mountain to the left, and with the Doria rushing furiously on to the right, until we came to the Glacier des Myages, which descends directly from the summit of Mont Blanc.

Our guides here desired us to get on as fast as we could, in order to escape the danger which arises from large masses of stone, that are continually falling from a rampart of débris, behind which the glacier is hid from your sight. We did not see any of the stones fall, but they hung in a very threatening manner above us. Some beautiful flowers grew among these débris. The narrow-leaved willow-herb (*epilobium angustissimum*) grew very high, and with remarkably large bunches of flowers, and made a handsome appearance; and the bright crimson stone-crop looked very pretty. These débris are full of curious studies for a geologist. M. de Saussures visited them, and was amply repaid for his trouble.

From the Glacier des Myages, we cross-

ed a very well-constructed bridge without mortar, and entered the Allée Blanche: the wood went on the edge of the Lake of Combal, and a steep mountain rose almost perpendicularly from the path. This lake is as wild as any thing can be. The summit of Mont Blanc is to the right, and this is the finest view of it; as here it is more perpendicular, and less hid or broken by intervening points, than when seen from any other spot. It was soon covered with clouds, which descended on us in torrents, accompanied by thunder and lightning, which were above, below, and on every side of us. We were in the midst of the clouds which were bursting, and the effect of the storm, in this place and situation, was too sublime to allow of my regretting the complete wetting that we had.

And here Frank showed himself a fine little fellow; for, jumping off the mule which he was riding, he ran by the side of his sister's, to encourage her in case she should be frightened.

We then ascended the Col de la Seigne, and re-entered Savoy. The guide whom I was walking with, drew up his head with great apparent satisfaction, and exclaimed, "Maintenant nous sommes Savoyards!" On each side of the boundary between the two countries, are two fortresses. Magnificent as this spot is, there must have been no room in the world below, when it was thought necessary to defend this situation.

We soon came to a chalet, where we got comfortably dried by a fire, and had a delicious repast of cream, in which we soaked some of the bread that we had brought from Courmayeur.

We then descended into the Valley des Glaciers, and stopped at the Grand Chalet de Môtet, to rest ourselves and our mules.

My duty to my father, who, I hope, is better than when we parted. I am, my dear Jane,

Your very affectionate brother,
HARRY SEYMOUR.

LETTER XX.

Fanny Rose to Jane Seymour.

CHAPIEU, August 14.

MY DEAR JANE,

WE rested in the middle of the day at the Grand Châlet de Môtet. It consists of one extremely large room, with divisions which do not go quite across it, partly like those for the stalls for a stable. It is inhabited by a large family, of three generations. Every thing was very clean and orderly-looking. My mother and I had a very pleasant chat with a nice old woman, about the management of her dairy; and she seemed pleased at our admiring the pretty head-dress of one of her grand-children. They milk fifty cows, she told us; and they are proprietors of ten of them. They keep a great many pigs, which were running round about the

châlet, and feeding on the dock-leaves which grow there in great abundance. They appeared to have every thing in great plenty ; and, for their manner of living, great comfort.

The road from thence to Chapieu was fine, but wild and dreary, and wanting in variety ; at least, after the sublime scenery we had witnessed this morning, it appeared to me to do so.

As we went along, my guide gave me an account of his ascending Mont Blanc with an English gentleman ; and as it may interest you, I will repeat it, as nearly as I can, in his own words. “ We went up,” he said, “ very quickly ; for we left Chamouny at eight o’clock in the morning, four guides besides myself and Monsieur. We arrived at the Grand Mulets at four in the afternoon ; and at night-fall we were overtaken by a furious tempest ; after which we resumed our journey, and at five o’clock in the morning we arrived at the *rocher rouge*, where we were attacked by a violent wind, with an insupportable cold ;

and though I had on two pair of gloves, two of my fingers became frozen, and we were obliged to stoop and lean upon our sticks, to prevent our being carried away by the wind. All these difficulties disconcerted the guides; but, by an effort, I took the lead, and being at a little distance from the rest, I called to them and encouraged them. They rallied, and we arrived at the summit of Mont Blanc at fifty minutes past eleven. I was there five minutes alone. Two of the guides had been taken very ill, and we had been obliged to leave them at the *rocher rouge*. We took a short rest of ten minutes, and then began our descent, and arrived at the hôtel at Chamouny at nine o'clock in the evening, very well satisfied with our victory. We had made 'le voyage de Mont Blanc' in thirty-six hours, which is what no one had ever done before."

We got wet through twice, and nearly dry again, in our descent to the châlets of Chapieu, where we shall take up our abode for to-night. I am afraid I shall

not be able to get out and take a view here, for it rains and thunders violently. This chalet is so far superior to those around us, that it has a chimney; and a room above stairs, in which my mother and I are to take up our night's lodging, on two beds of loose straw, and I dare say I shall sleep famously. Good night, dear Jane.

I am always,

Your affectionate friend,

FANNY ROSE.

LETTER XXI.

Fanny Rose to Jane Seymour.

CHAPIEU, August 15.

MY DEAR JANE,

WE made a good supper, on eggs, milk, and wine, which we procured at the chalet, and some of the bread which we had brought with us from Courmayeur. A handsome, stupid-looking girl, with a fair complexion and light hair, sat still and looked on the whole evening, without taking any notice of us. She had a remarkably pretty head-dress, of the same kind as that of the little girl at the Grand Chalet de Môtet. It is a stiff front, covered with white silk, and embroidered at the edge with gold thread, and with flowers in a pattern over it. It is made in a peak on the forehead, and shaped to

the face; the hair divided on the forehead, as represented in the pictures of the Madonna. The hair behind is bound round tight with ribbon, and brought up in a circle, and fastened to this front at the top with a bunch of ribbon. It was in this instance green, and made a pretty contrast to her fine flaxen hair. The rest of the girl's dress was pretty and picturesque; consisting of a red petticoat, very full; and a laced boddice, with full, short, white sleeves.

I was just begging for the cap, to take a pattern of it, when Frank whispered to me, "Pray, Fanny, do not have any interference with that thing of a cap; for the boy says that his sister's hair is only unbound and dressed on Saturdays;" so I thought it best to follow Frank's advice.

I wish the girl had been more intelligent; for it is a pity to see any thing so handsome and so stupid as she seemed to be. The damsel's brother, a lad of

sixteen or seventeen, was apparently the active person of the family, officiating, by turns, as maitre d'hôtel, valet de chambre, and in various other capacities. He had an odd mixture of shrewdness and lubberliness (as Frank calls it) about him.

My guide told me that he once conducted a very nervous gentleman this tour. They were alone; and the extraordinary scenery had such an effect on him, that, when he arrived here, he took a fancy into his head that the people were brigands, and would rob or murder him. They talk a French *patois*, which he could not understand; and this heightened the idea. He would not touch any of the provisions which they spread out for him, for fear of being poisoned; but made the guide kill one of the hens, (for which the people charged him an enormous price,) and dress it himself; and he gave him his purse to keep, making him promise to sit up by him and watch during the night.

And now I must tell you how we were disposed of last night. My mother and I ascended to our apartment by a ladder, through an aperture in the floor, which has no door or covering. The wooden bench I am sitting on, and a rough table, form the furniture of the room; with the exception of a chest, to hold the best clothes of the family; and two bundles of loose straw, over which we spread our cloaks. The room below was occupied by my father, Frank, and the boy before mentioned; none of whom have had any thing but the benches and table to repose on. I hear William is just come in, and giving an account of his night's lodging. He says that it was in a large room, or rather out-house, in which the master and mistress of the family slept in one corner, some children in another, the four guides in the third corner, and the fourth was occupied by your brother and himself; while some sociable goats rambled about and nibbled at the different beds, all of which were of hay or straw.

I retired to my straw couch delighted, and dreaming of all the grand and magnificent scenery I had passed through, so different from any thing I had ever seen before, and very much inclined to take a good night's rest; for I can sleep very well with my clothes on, and care but little how hard my bed is. But there were so many of those little black animals which we saw at Courmayeur, that I was glad to get up as soon as it was light, and write to you.

My father asked, last night, what we should have to pay; and the charge seems high for such accommodations. But the people say that fuel is procured with difficulty, and brought from a distance; as these châteaux are in too elevated a situation for any wood to grow near them. And indeed we had so little fire, that we could scarcely dry our clothes, which got wet several times during yesterday's journey.

All these storms have cleared the air, and the sun shines with dazzling splen-

dour. The morning is lovely, and I look forward to a day of wonder and delight.

Adieu, my dear Jane,

Believe me, truly,

Your affectionate friend,

FANNY ROSE.

LETTER XXII.

William Rose to Mr. Seymour.

CONTAMINE, August 16.

MY DEAR SIR,

WE went up a long and steep ascent from Chapieu. The mountains around us were so jagged, that their outline almost resembled a saw: the little St. Bernard, covered with snow, was at the end of the valley to the left. Every thing around us was wild, bleak, and savage. We came to a torrent of water and broken ice, at which, for some time, the mules made a stand and refused to go. The guides lifted my mother and Fanny off their mules and carried them over, skipping from stone to stone like chamois-goats, and landed them safely on the other side.

We went over a great deal of snow, in our ascent of three hours to the Col du

Bonhomme. The road was very puzzling, even to the leading guide and mule, both of whom had made this tour last week; for the torrents are continually shifting the paths. The road from Contamine to Chapieu is still more difficult than from Chapieu to Contamine, as there are two valleys in the descent from the Col du Bonhomme to the place we had left, which are nearly alike in appearance; but one of them leads far out of the way. We passed through several torrents in our ascent. A great many small cows were feeding about, either staked, or with bells round their necks; and we saw, at a little distance from the path, a miserable-looking shed, intended as a refuge for those who look after the cattle, and which, our guides told us, often serves them for a lodging during the night.

“Shepherdess of the Alps” is a pretty sounding title; but what part of the Alps of Savoy Marmontel could find for the scene of his tale, I am at a loss to conjecture. I never yet saw the situation

among them, where an elegant female in gossamer attire, could repose under willows, and warble ditties while her flocks gambolled around her. Hardly do the peasants earn their daily meals, exposed to cold and every vicissitude of weather: poorly clothed, poorly fed and lodged, their scanty gains are won with hard labour and fatigue. And an English shepherd, when he pens his sheep and retires to his comfortable home, is a prince, in luxury, when compared with the shepherds of the Alps.

The Col du Bonhomme is a very singularly-shaped mountain, leaning on one side, with an outline so exceedingly jagged that it appears as if it had no depth. A smaller mountain stands by the side of it, the top of which is formed like a castle; and this is called "La Femme du Bonhomme." On this elevated spot the ground was spread with beautiful flowers; and I particularly observed the deep crimson stonecrop; the pretty little pink gentian centaurum, which grows in such profusion at St. Ber-

nard's ; and a little ranunculus, crimson without and yellow within, and which Fanny thinks is the *ranunculus glacialis*. The higher the ground which we have trodden, the brighter have been the flowers, invariably.

The highest pass crossed, we came to a fine waterfall, which we left to our right ; and stopped at a *châlet* to procure some milk, or rather cream. It was the neatest *châlet* I had seen, and had the greatest appearance of comfort, except in having no chimney. It was occupied by two women, who were very well-mannered, and so civil that I might almost call them polite. They asked us to give them a trifle for their mother, who was bed-ridden at some place lower down ; and they were in such admiration of a black feather which Fanny had in her hat, that she made them a present of it, and I never saw any one look so proud and so delighted.

A large drove of pigs were feeding round this *châlet*, and a good deal of

wood lay scattered about it. Altogether, it looked as comfortable as such a building in such a situation could be expected to look; but comfort is a word not very applicable to any of them.

I remain, my dear sister,

Yours very sincerely,

WILLIAM ROSE.

LETTER XXIII.

Harry Seymour to his Sister.

CONTAMINE, August 16.

MY DEAR JANE,

ON our descent from the Col du Bonhomme, we passed over a very large tract of snow, leaving a glacier to our right; and then entered on a plain called Le Plan des Dames: so named, as our guides told us, from its being the burying-place of three women, who perished there in the snow. The spot was marked by a heap of stones, to which custom requires that every person that passes by should add one. One of our guides, who was more gallant or more witty than the rest, took up an enormous stone, and throwing it on

the heap, exclaimed, "La ! pour la plus jolie."

There is something to me very pleasing in this primeval sort of monument ; and I remember both you and I were very much struck with the first cairn we ever saw, and which is over the grave of the last king of Cumberland.

We passed afterwards into a smaller plain, called Le Plan du Mont Jovet ; and then by the châlets of Nant Bourent ; but we did not stop at them.

All the scenery from Chapieu had been wilder than my wildest dreams had ever fancied ; but we now met with one of those striking contrasts which I so delight in, by descending into the beautiful valley of Mont Joye. On the right, the mountains were bold and sharp, and the glacier of Trelatête spread low towards the valley. On the left was Mont Jolie, covered with verdure, and dotted about with pines, as in a park in England. In one place there was a straight line of



*From the window at the Cure's House
at Coutamine.*

Letter 23.



London Published by Harvey & Darton, Gracechurch Street, 1828.



grass, of almost dazzling brightness, about two hundred yards in breadth. It reached from the top of the mountain to the bottom, without the vestige of a tree; and it was wooded on either side, so as to resemble an avenue cut through a thick forest. This was occasioned by an avalanche which fell about twelve years since, and swept before it every tree in its course down the mountain, in the straight line which I have attempted to describe.

We now descended by a rugged, stony road, and crossed a bridge over the Bonant, at the left of which was a picturesque waterfall; the river tumbling from a considerable height, and losing itself in foam over large pieces of rock; and the trees growing luxuriantly on the sides, and bending over the cataract. We scrambled down to the foot of the cascade, and there we saw it in tenfold beauty.

To the left, a little further on, is a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary; of

which said chapel, one of the guides told me a very wonderful story. The building contains an image of the Virgin, which has been celebrated, time immemorial, for performing many and great miracles. Some years ago, some Piedmontese wanting the assistance of the miraculous image, stole it away, and were carrying it off, undiscovered, in a sack. When they came to the Col du Bonhomme, either they wished to make its acquaintance, or to put up some petition to it, or they thought they would look into the sack to see if it was safe; when, to their astonishment, they found that it was gone, having made its escape from its marauding friends, and returned safe to the chapel. It has remained there ever since, unmolested, and is celebrated and visited more than ever.

We continued the same rugged path by the side of the river, until we reached the village of Contamine; but had its roughness been twenty times greater, it would have been twenty times repaid by

its extreme beauty; and the scene was rendered more singular by the accidental appearance of the atmosphere. A heavy rain had fallen, and had now ceased; and the mist rising from the valley formed itself into clouds, and in that form gradually ascended the mountains which encircled us.

Contamine is a pretty, romantic village, too much secluded to possess an inn; so the curé has been so hospitable as to take us in, and at his house we are very comfortably lodged and kindly entertained. He is an elderly, kind-hearted man, with great simplicity of manners. He has had a delightful wood fire made for us, in a large fire-place; and while the dinner is preparing, we have had some wine and excellent white bread. He has two nephews staying with him: the one a young surgeon from the neighbourhood of Geneva; and the other a lad of about twelve years old, from Martigny, who is spending his holidays here, being at school with another uncle at Passy.

I never thought myself fond of good eating, or attached to luxury; but there is something very comfortable in this bright wood fire, and this nice wholesome bread; and thy brother, my dear Jane, is just now enjoying himself prodigiously.

HARRY SEYMOUR.

LETTER XXIV.

Fanny Rose to Jane Seymour.

CONTAMINE, August 17.

MY DEAR JANE,

WE are here at the house of the curé, who is so kind as to entertain travellers who come this way. Besides the two nephews who are on a visit to him, he has living with him a very pleasing young woman, who, I believe, is some relation, and who is something between hostess and servant. They all joined in doing the honours of the house, and making us very welcome and very comfortable.

We had a plentiful, well-dressed dinner, served up with great neatness. In the evening, the old gentleman seemed delighted to tell us his old stories; and

I am sure I was quite as delighted to listen to them. He entertained us with a great many accounts relating to the time when the French took possession of Savoy; and talked to us about his brother, of whose talents and dexterity he seemed very proud, and who had escaped from being taken as a conscript by acting the part of a fool, so cleverly as to deceive every one who saw him: his friends actually thought that fright and distress had deprived him of his senses. He now keeps an academy at Passy, where one of the curé's nephews, who is now here, receives his education. The old gentleman laughed, with great glee, while he endeavoured to imitate his brother's acting.

He told us some stories of St. Bernard, that were quite romantic. When St. Bernard was a young man, his father and mother (the Conte de Manthon and his lady) were very anxious that he should marry; and he was accordingly betrothed to a young lady of suitable age and connexions. The day of their marriage was

fixed ; when he left the house suddenly, escaping by the window, and leaving a letter behind him to say that he felt called upon to follow a monastic life. He then went, under a feigned name, to the Cité d'Aoste, where he studied ; and he was preferred to a high situation among the students, being remarkable for his learning and piety. He exerted himself with great zeal to convert the people from paganism to Christianity ; and seeing that a number of persons flocked to the temple of Jupiter on Mont Jovis, he formed the plan of building a convent there ; and from that time the mountain took the name of Mont St. Bernard. As he entertained all travellers who passed that way, the convent soon became celebrated ; and his parents determined upon going there, in the hopes that, among the numerous travellers, they might hear some tidings of their long-lost son ; but when they arrived there, they were greatly astonished at recognising him in the person of the abbot.

We spent a most agreeable evening, seated by the good old curé's comfortable fire-side ; and after the accommodations we had met with since we left St. Bernard's, it was no small luxury to recline in an easy chair, (in which I took my turn as well as the rest,) by a bright fire, and afterwards to retire to nice clean beds. Our breakfast this morning was set out with a taste that would have done credit to a much more polished situation : good coffee, a bowl of cream, some delicious honey, light bread made with fine flour, and baked in large rolls ; with a table-cloth and napkins as white as snow, and the breakfast-table ornamented with a basin of fresh and sweet flowers.

This house is very plain and unadorned. There is a small study with books. The room in which we are sitting is white-washed ; the tables are of deal, as are the chairs with wooden seats to them ; and, with the exception of the curé's easy chair, there is no article of luxury in the apartment. The view from both the win-

dows is beautiful ; especially that from the window at the end of the room. It looks up a green valley, sprinkled with cottages and pine-trees ; the river Bonant runs winding through it ; and in the distance is the Peak of Biomassey, and the Col du Bonhomme.

I should like very much to ramble about this beautiful valley, and go into some of the cottages ; but the rain is descending in such torrents, that it is impossible to stir out of doors without being completely wet through : I am therefore obliged to remain within, and my mother and I have had a very pleasant chat with the inmates of the house. My mother had fortunately brought a few papers of needles with her, which she requested the young woman's acceptance of, and we were very glad to see that she looked pleased with them. Needles are very convenient to carry about with you, for they take but little room ; and our English needles are so much better than those of foreign manufacture, that they are a very useful little present.

Salanche, August 18.—I left my letter open until we arrived at this place, that I might complete our tour of Mont Blanc. I assure you I felt quite sorry to leave our kind friends at Contamine; for I began to feel myself quite acquainted with them, and I can never, of course, expect to see them again. On our arriving at this place, my guide Anselm lifted me from my mule, and said, in a most agreeable manner, and with an air of great satisfaction, “Maintenant nous sommes bien arrivés, et vous n’avez jamais dit que vous étiez fatiguée;” and I honestly confess that I felt no small degree of pleasure from the praise he bestowed upon me.

A most delightful little journey indeed we have had; and what of difficulty or fatigue may be met with in the course of this tour, is so much more than compensated by all you see, that it is not worth thinking of. This tour is about sixty-five leagues, and is commonly made in eight days. Travellers generally contrive to be at St. Bernard’s on a Sunday, as it

is a holiday, and on that day the ecclesiastics are more prepared to receive them.

My mother has borne the fatigue of her journey extremely well, and I am delighted to tell you, does not even appear to have caught a cold. Whenever we got wet through, without being able to dry our clothes or change them, (which was several times the case,) we drank some cold water, by the advice of our guides, and we certainly found the good effects of the plan.

I have found my little French pallet (which was set out for miniatures) very convenient; for it takes no room, and contains most of the colours which are wanted for flowers.

To-morrow I take leave of my guide, for whom I have quite a regard, and in whom I have felt the most entire confidence. And I must wish good-bye to my little sure-footed mule; for to-morrow we return to Geneva, and in a few days, my dear Jane, I hope to meet with you, and tell you all that I have omitted to write to

you. You will, I know, share in the pleasure I have had, and rejoice at our safe return. I do not know how to thank my kind father sufficiently for having taken me this delightful journey.

I am, my dear Jane,

Yours, most affectionately,

FANNY ROSE.

LETTER XXV.

Harry Seymour to his Father.

SALANCHE, August 18.

MY DEAR FATHER,

THE weather being extremely wet, we remained a whole day guests of the good old curé at Contamine. He receives annually 800 francs (£33. 7s. 6d.) All the curés in Savoy receive a regular stipend from government. They are much respected; and all their parishioners who can afford it, contribute to the support of their curé, making him presents of cheese, butter, honey, and other produce of their farms.

Mr. Rose occupied himself with the curé in his study: William, Frank, and myself, accompanied by his two nephews, rambled about the valley, and mounted the heights that surround it, chatting with the pea-

sants, and shooting a few rabbits. We got wet through, and remained so the greater part of the day; but our obliging companions told us that they cared as little for the weather as we did; and our scruples on their account being at rest, we roamed about wherever our fancy led us, and spent a delightful day.

Mr. and Mrs. Rose consulted together how to make some return to our host for our entertainment, without offending his delicacy; and they settled that the best way would be, that Mr. Rose should make a present to the young school-boy, and Mrs. Rose to the young woman, of some money, which they accordingly did.

The next day, the weather cleared up about noon, when we took leave of our kind host and his relations, to pursue our route to St. Gervais. We got completely wet through and dry again, two or three times, before we reached a resting-place.

The baths of St. Gervais are much more attractive than those at Courmayeur.

The accommodations are good, and every thing appears neat and orderly. The spring is impregnated with pure sulphur, and is rather more than lukewarm. The place is very much resorted to ; and there was a great deal of company there, among whom I heard the names of several English persons.

The river Bonant makes a fine cascade here. To have a good view of it, we ascended to the top of a torrent by a slippery path that hung over it ; and from thence the uproar of the water had a fine effect.

We rode through a beautiful fertile valley to Salanche, the mountains on both sides covered with cultivation, and enriched by water-falls, having our old friend the Aiguille de Varens in view. The clouds were hovering half way up the mountains, so that in some places we literally saw the cascades falling into the clouds.

We reached Salanche about four in the afternoon, having been very fortunate in

our tour round Mont Blanc. The only disappointment we met with was, the stormy weather during our passage through the Allée Blanche, which so *soon* enveloped the summit of Mont Blanc in clouds. Our guides were all steady, intelligent, and trust-worthy; and our mules were good-tempered and sure-footed.

I believe it is generally allowed that the Savoyard guides are very superior to those of either Switzerland or Italy. Of the first I know too little to judge; but I give a decided preference to those of Savoy over those of Italy, with the exception of the Salvadors at Mount Vesuvius.

The people of Savoy are in general intelligent and honest; and those who fit themselves for guides, as for a profession, make a point of gaining the kind of knowledge which is useful to themselves, and is of interest to travellers; besides which, their steady composure of character, and their endurance of hardship, fit them peculiarly well for the office of guides.

To-morrow we return to Geneva; and

I hope in a few days to find you at Lausanne, in better health than you were when I left you. Will you, my dear Sir, be so kind as to give the little enclosure, which accompanies this, to Jane. I should be ashamed to send it to you; but Jane is too young to be a severe critic, especially to her brother.

I remain, my dear father,

Your affectionate son,

HARRY SEYMOUR.

Enclosure from Harry Seymour to his Sister.

SALANCHE, August 18.

Preserv'd by thy Almighty pow'r,
I've heard the thunder's echoing crash :
I've seen the dreadful tempest lower,
And brav'd the forked lightning's crash.

I went o'er mountains bleak and wild,
By precipices deep and high,
Where rock on rock above us pil'd,
Seem'd tottering as we pass'd them by.

I've stemm'd th' unruly torrent's force,
Seen the destructive avalanche fall ;
And safely have pursu'd my course
O'er summer snow and icy wall.

I've pass'd where hurricanes have rent
The strongest trees in ruin hurl'd ;
And by such devastation went,
As seem'd the shipwreck of the world.

A land of beauty too I've seen,
Where vineyards grow and nobles dwell;
Of cultur'd hill and valley green,
Of bright cascade and woody dell.

Thy wondrous works of ev'ry kind,
Thy pow'r and goodness well I know:
O may I thy protection find,
To shield me wheresoe'er I go!

Through every danger yet to come,
O still my guide in mercy be!
Then lead me to my heavenly home,
And take my soul in peace to thee!

*Heights of the principal places mentioned in this
Tour, above the level of the sea.*

| | FEET. |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Mont Blanc | 15,526 |
| Aiguille d'Argentiere .. | 12,173 |
| Mont Velan | 11,021 |
| Mont Buet | 10,106 |
| Col de la Segne | 8083 |
| Col du Bon-homme ... | 8032 |
| Convent of St. Bernard . | 8006 |
| Col de Balme | 7558 |
| Montanvert | 6106 |
| Courmayeur | 4000 |
| Valley of Chamouny .. | 3354 |

THE END.

